

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

### **Let No One Delude You Colossians 2:1-7**

We'll be in Colossians Chapter 2, the beginning of Colossians 2. You can turn there. You know Jesus talked about children. He did it in Matthew 18. In light of today's children's program I thought I'd read this.

**"He called the child to himself and set him before them and said 'truly I say to you unless you are converted and become my children you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Who ever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one such child in my name receives me. But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble it is better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck and that he be drown in the depths of the sea. Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks for it is inevitable that stumbling blocks would come but woe to the man through whom the stumbling block comes.' "**

And we see this being taught not only about children but that we too can have faith like a child and be able to come into the kingdom of God through faith because children are very easy to encourage in certain things. And they're also very vulnerable as well. The children can be hurt, and stumbling blocks can come in the way of the children. And this is true with us. We can be led astray and be hurt by people that can say things that will harm us.

So we will look at that this morning in Colossians Chapter 2. I will read for you the first seven verses and we will be looking at that this morning.

Colossians 2:1-7 says and Paul writes: **"For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf, and for those who are in Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face; that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery that is Christ Himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I say this in order that no one may delude you with persuasive argument. For even though I am absent in body never the less I am with you in the spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ. As you therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him, established in your faith, just as you were instructed, overflowing with gratitude."**

And the central part of this passage is verse four. It sort of focuses this

passage. When we looked in the first chapter of Colossians 1 we saw how the

church was grounded in truth. We saw who Christ was as the creator. And as the reconciler of all man, that we can know Him. And what the church should do in response to that truth, proclaim Him and admonish every person, teaching them so that every man can be mature. So this is how Christ is focused in our thoughts. But not everyone understands this, and can be deluded.

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Colossians 2 is focused on guarding the church from error. Colossians 1 grounds the church in truth, Colossians 2 guards the church from error. And so as we go through this chapter we will see that the church can be led astray. People, Christians, can be led astray, like children.

Now the central part, verse four, "**I say this in order that no one may delude you with persuasive argument**" is where the problem is found. This word delude seems like a strong, pejorative term. But it really is something that can be true of anyone and it doesn't mean something that is a put down, it simply means to "reckon wrongly." The problem addressed in 2:1-7 is found in 2:4. "Delude" means "to reckon wrongly," and speaks to our susceptibility to being led astray. Delude means to reckon wrongly, to consider erroneously about something. It speaks to our susceptibility to be led astray. If we are not careful we will be susceptible to being led astray and we need to protect ourselves so that no one will be able to delude us. So that's the focus of this passage. What comes before it and what comes after it develops this idea.

### **1. The problem of being deluded.**

So we will look at two things this morning. We will look at the problem of being deluded, how that happens. And then we will look at how to protect yourself from being deluded. As we look at how delusion happens let's remember. "Let him who thinks he stand take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12).

Anyone is potentially susceptible to being deluded. We shouldn't think more highly of ourselves than we ought and think, "I'm stable; I'm not going to be led astray." We all can potentially be led astray; we need to protect ourselves from this.

I was thinking about how pervasive arguments delude people. I don't know how many people you've seen led astray, who are part of a church, but it really doesn't happen from cults that are readily observed by the world and seen as being a fringed group. Like people that shave their heads or wear funny clothes or that sort of thing. I don't think we're at great threat of those types of people.

I also don't think that we are at threat of groups like the Jehovah Witnesses or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, known as the Mormons. As my experience has been, I don't see that has taken anybody that I can think of away from following Christ that has been part of this church. I think we are susceptible to other groups, other types of people and that we need to be more concerned about.

In my 12 years of being apart of our pastoral staff, and many years involved in ministry of peoples lives before that, I've seen certain ways that people gain leverage in persuasive arguments. Arguments that are wrong. The idea of being deluded with persuasive arguments here presupposes that these arguments are wrong arguments. That these are not true, these are not the truth of God's Word, but are used to delude people.

So there are types of ways that people will go about gaining leverage to get people moved in a certain direction and I've categorized them. These are not anything more than just my observations, what I've seen. But I thought I'd list them out for you:

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Gerry's top ten persuasive arguments that have been used to delude Christians.

### 10. False Humility.

False humility from my experience has been when people will exude humility, like "Well it's not me, it's all God," or "It's just God working through me," that will communicate how humble they are, what they've given up, what they've committed themselves to, to sacrifice in various ways. And these sorts of things are able to cause people who are maybe susceptible to think, "Wow, they're really committed, they're really humble." Well humble people don't really need to tell you how humble they are, do they? But there is a way that we can manipulate people to think we've really done a lot, we've really given up a lot for the sake of Christ. So therefore, our arguments should be listened to beyond other people's arguments.

### 9. Arrogant Intimidation.

Arrogant intimidation, not only in degrees that people hold or people that they may be connected to, or have known, or had lunch with, or drop this person's name. Even the way someone carries himself so that you will know that they are really the ones that know what is going on and that you should listen to their arguments because they are right. That way of bringing about intimidation will cause someone who is susceptible to think, "Gee, they must know what they are talking about, I better believe what they are saying," rather than evaluating their words based on what God's Word says. We should look at what God's Word says about what people believe not just take what they say because they are so strong in their personality.

### 8. Unfair Comparisons.

There are comparisons that take place even in the Scripture. But it's done unfairly is when we compare people who are not on the same footing with each other.

For example, I think that younger people tend to be a little more susceptible to these persuasive arguments. And I've seen this happen where people will say to younger people, teenagers, people in their twenties, people who are really eager and want to do things for the Lord. They will compare younger people to older people and say these older people are not really as committed and zealous. And there are reasons that we may not look as committed, because we have various responsibilities. As you go through life, you pick them up along the way and because of these responsibilities it is not so easy to drop everything and go do X, Y, or Z task, or go to X, Y, or Z place and do those things. So it may appear that certain people who are older just are not as committed as people who are younger. So then the younger person can think, "Yeah, I really want to be committed to the Lord and so therefore I will do whatever this person wants me to do," simply because there has been unfair comparisons made. We can make all kinds of different unfair comparisons.

Comparing people that really don't have the opportunities or advantages that other people do and that just becomes unfair when we make those kinds of comparisons. But it is a technique that people will use to advance arguments. And we need to be careful of those.

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### 7. Personal Attacks.

This is pretty common. When your argument doesn't carry the day you attack the person (it's called *ad hominem* arguments). That people when their arguments aren't sufficient, attack the person who is making the argument or even the person who may be associated with those arguments, those beliefs.

You can do this with doctrine. You can do this with orthodox doctrine. You can think, well this person believed this too and you know how messed up that person was and describe the types of behavior that such and such person did. We can find all kinds of people who are odd and weird that will believe some of the same things that we believe. Just because someone has attached themselves to the same beliefs doesn't mean that those beliefs are wrong. So personal attacks are easy to do but are unfair. And even can be very sinful.

### 6. Compelling Testimonials.

Compelling testimonials are when people give anecdotal evidence of what something has done for them. And we see testimonials given for all kinds of things, truthfully or not truthfully, sincerely or not sincerely, to sell something and to help people.

Testimonies are a powerful thing. Your testimony's a powerful thing. But people can use testimonies in good ways and not so good ways. And how do you really know whether somebody's testimony is true or not true. Or whether they may think sincerely that they've had this experience and maybe they don't. You have to compare these testimonies with other things. Not just take testimonies at face value in and of itself. And even the Scripture does this. There are testimonies in the Scripture and they don't stand alone, they are built up by lots of other information.

So compelling testimonials only go so far and can not be given to much weight because we can find people who will give stories about anything.

### 5. False Guilt.

There is guilt when we do things that are wrong and sinful and we feel guilty about that and the Lord forgives us for the sin. But then there is a whole other way that people will pressure people into doing things that will cause them to feel bad if they don't do this, that or the other thing. This sort of manipulation I've termed as false guilt. Actually we get to see more of this in Colossians Chapter 2 as this book goes on, this kind of pressure, coercion for making people feel guilty and then moving them in a certain direction to tell them their guilt will be alleviated that way.

### 4. Manipulating Scripture.

Manipulating Scripture is done in many, many ways but here are two more common ways that people will manipulate Scripture to advance a persuasive argument in order to delude. We can manipulate Scripture not just by ripping it out of its context, certainly that's done, but even as we read it and it actually says what we're saying it says but we're giving it more weight than what the Bible gives it and we don't read it in the biblical context and so we will emphasize something out of proportion.

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Another subtle way that people do this that we need to be careful of is they will not teach what the Scripture says, they will explain what the Scripture doesn't say. Like, "Jesus never did this." Jesus never drove a car, what are you driving a car? You should be walking! We should give more weight to what the Scripture teaches rather than what it doesn't teach. Just because it doesn't say something doesn't mean that that thing is wrong. So people will use that to bolster their argument, that's a weak argument.

### 3. False Promises.

False promises are where we give, maybe directly or indirectly, or passively, some expectation that if you do this, then that will occur. Like if you give so much money or you do some sort of ministry then this will happen. If you do this with your children then that will happen, these false promises can be very enticing when we want that to happen and we are looking for answers. So we will think, "Well this person says it will happen," and we'll be more open to giving it some weight and be led astray.

### 2. Using Relationships.

Relationships are very strong and can be used positively or negatively. They are very powerful. Using relationships is not in a serving sense, but in a getting sense. Where we will cause people, because of the way we manipulate relationships, we can cause people to be doing something simply because of their relationship with us. They don't want to let us down. So people will do that because they feel like they want to please that other person and some people will seek to advance their persuasive arguments through manipulating relationships. And that's not good at all.

### 1. Appeals To Our Flesh.

We want certain things and if someone comes along and appeals to those things that we really crave for ourselves then we can be more interested and open to that coming about. When people say, "Well you know you're not really appreciated like you should be appreciated," or "You're not earning as much money as you should be earning," or "You're not gaining what you really deserve" and that sort of thing, we want to say, "Yeah, I'm not," and if somebody approaches us that sort of way it can be very persuasive.

These are just some of the ways that people will, in the church even, potentially manipulate us. Now I'm not sharing this because I think we are at high risk here. There have been times in our church history where I thought we're in greater danger than in the present. Things are going reasonably well but that may not be the case tomorrow. These things will keep coming I believe and we need to be on guard, lest people come to delude and lead us astray. We don't want that to happen.

### **2. The protection from being deluded**

Let's talk now about how to protect ourselves from being deluded. This passage really gives us a lot of information about being protected from being deluded and led astray by persuasive arguments. Let's look at how that happens, how we can protect ourselves. Verses one and two talk about this.

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a. We are protected by a settled connection to our fellowship in the church.

(2:1-2)

Let's see how that happens, verses one and two, **"For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf, and for those who are in Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face; that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love."**

So we can be protected by a connectedness to the fellowship because fellow believers will exert effort on your behalf. Paul says, **I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf so that no one would be deluded. I say this so no one would be deluded.** So he is exerting effort for that purpose.

1) Fellow believers will exert effort on your behalf

And fellow believers will exert effort to help people. Not every one of them, but some will, and I've seen that. There are people in this fellowship that will rise to the occasion and give an effort to seek to help people who are potentially being deluded and led astray. And that's a wonderful place to be, to know that there are people around you that will give an effort, that will struggle to keep you from being confused and persuaded by arguments that are not true. It's a wonderful thing.

2) Fellow believers will extend encouragement to your heart

Fellow believers will extend encouragement to your heart because everyone can be discouraged. Verse two says, **that their hearts may be encouraged**, so we can bring encouragement to each other, stimulation to continue onward in love and good deeds rather than to give into our nature and be led astray.

3) Fellow believers will effectively enfold you in love

Verse two says, **having been knit together in love**. That's the way my version reads it. United together. This idea of knitting together brings to mind a fabric. In a fabric you have strands of thread that are woven together and you can not pull a thread out of a fabric very easily because it has been interconnected and intertwined with the other threads. And as we are being knit together in love, we will be enfolded so that we will not be easily led astray, that we will be connected to fellow believers. And we need to put ourselves in that position so that we are not just connected to one person or two people but that we are connected to quite a number of people. So if we begin to drift in our faith there will be people that will come along side. Not even one person, not even two people but others that will come along side us to help us, to protect us, because we have been woven together.

So, suffice it to say, a proper association with Christ's body enables us to restore those led astray. Not just putting ourselves in the position to protect us but to put ourselves in a position to help in protecting others. To seek to serve others so that they would be restored in case they were being tempted to be led astray. So we can be participating in this effort to protect others. And also participating in the encouragement that is being extended to others so we can effectively enfold others in the fellowship so they will be guarded and not be so susceptible to being deluded by

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persuasive arguments. That's what you should be striving for. To be well connected with people relationally in the church.

b. We are protected by a secure comprehension of our fortune in Christ

(2:2-3)

We have a great thing in knowing Christ and that protects us from being deluded. Knowing Christ protects us from being deluded. That comes from the end of verse two and verse three, "**attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery that is Christ Himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**"

In Christ we have a mystery revealed to us. Knowing Christ is a hidden mystery that is revealed to us. From the last passage we saw that this mystery is Christ in us, the hope of glory. We have Christ dwelling among us, and this has now been revealed to us. And it has been revealed to us so that we can appreciate the treasure.

Knowing Christ is a hidden treasure that is received by us. Because in Him is hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. That is we know Him, we understand Him, we comprehend Him. Then we will be more and more protected from persuasive arguments that delude. Knowing Christ will guard us from this, knowing Christ better and better will put us in a more

and more secure place.

A proper appreciation of Christ's person and work enables us to refute arguments. We will refute these persuasive arguments. We will be as much in danger of being led astray because these arguments really are false and when we know Christ better, we will know that these arguments are false and that Christ really is true, and we will not be diverted from Him.

c. We are protected by a strong commitment to our following of Christ

(2:5-7)

Our final section teaches that we are protected by a strong commitment to following Christ. Having a strong commitment of walking with Christ protects us. This comes in verses 5-7. Some translations put 6-7 in another section following this. I think verses 6 & 7 is a summary of this section, "**as you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord so walking in Him.**"

So verse 5, 6 & 7 puts it this way, "**For even though I am absent in body never the less I am with you in the spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ. As you therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him, established in your faith, just as you were instructed, overflowing with gratitude.**"

1) Our walk with Christ requires receiving Christ

So, we can be protected by walking with Christ. Lets look at this "**As you therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.**" There's a presupposition, when we walk with Christ we receive Christ. Our walking with Christ requires receiving Christ.

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And one reason why people are led astray by persuasive arguments is because they never received Christ. They don't know Christ. They haven't believed in Christ so they are more susceptible to being deluded because they don't know the Lord and they will be led astray. And that's why sometimes there's people who become a part of our fellowship and are led off because they have not truly in their heart believed Christ.

2) Our walk with Christ requires discipline

Verse five says, "**rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ.**" Good discipline and stability of faith in Christ protects us from being deluded by persuasive arguments.

Good discipline and stability of faith are terms that were military terms. Paul borrowed military terms to communicate how people can be stable in their faith. We walk with the Lord by good discipline and stability just like a soldier is faithfully serving by discipline, by being disciplined. So your walk with God requires discipline and I know that discipline happens differently for different people. Some things that will work for some people may not work for somebody else as well. But somehow you need to have a plan, a purpose for disciplining yourself so that you can have a vibrant walk with the Lord.

It just isn't going to happen by you just wanting it to happen, hoping it will happen. You have to have a plan and carry out that plan with discipline. So I encourage you to consider your discipline and whether you are disciplined to know the Word, to be regularly involved in what God's Word says. Whether you are praying in a disciplined fashion or whether it just sort of happens. Whether you're involved with the people in the fellowship consistently or whenever it just sort of happens, whenever it pops up and fits into your schedule. Like a soldier we should be stable and disciplined in order to carry out the plan that God has for us to walk with Him requires discipline.

3) Our walk with Christ requires faith

Faith is found in verse five, "**the stability of your faith**" and faith is found in verse seven, "**established in your faith.**" But verse six speaks of faith also "**As you therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.**" How do we receive Christ Jesus the Lord? We receive the Lord by faith. We believe in Christ and when we believe in Christ we receive Him. The same way we believe in Christ so we should walk in Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:7 says "**we walk by faith not by sight.**" We should walk by faith.

We are not only saved by faith, we are also sanctified by faith. As we walk with the Lord we need a trust in Him, in order to have a vibrant walk with Him. So that we won't think, "Well that's what God says but I'm not sure if that's right or not." Or, "I know that's what God wants me to do but I'm not sure that's going to turn out the way I want it to." But to be able to yield our concerns and our worries to God and trust that He is able to bring about his good purposes and allow Him to do that irregardless of our worries and fears and whether that's going to happen or not. We can trust Him.

So when we receive Christ we have faith, when we walk with Christ we need faith also. To trust that He has what's best in mind and we can put our life in His hands. That is really one reason why people are led astray because they just don't have faith to continue to follow Christ.



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They don't have faith that their fears and concerns aren't going to come about, that they can trust that what God has in mind is the best. Faith is really essential to a strong relationship with the Lord.

4) Our walk with Christ requires instruction

Verse seven says, "**having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him, established in your faith, just as you were instructed.**" This instruction is just a common word for teach. They were taught and in their being taught a number of things happened and these are very interesting.

Having been firmly rooted and now being build up and established: All three of those verbs are in the passive voice. They're passive in this sense, meaning that God has done this for these people, the Colossians. God is the one that firmly rooted them, God is the one that built them up and established them in faith, God did that. So as you receive Christ Jesus the Lord you are firmly rooted.

This term firmly rooted is in the perfect tense. That means that it happened and its event has continuing effects that move out from that, that will continue onward from that event. Of being firmly rooted we have fruitfulness that will continue to abound. And being built up and established in Him is something that God does for us just as we are instructed. God not only builds us up but He brings people who will help us understand, who will instruct us, and instruction is necessary to walking with God because we need to learn.

So what is the thing that we do here? We're being instructed, God is rooting us, building us up, establishing us. What's are role? Our role is walking with Him. That's the command that's given to us, that we are to do. We are to walk with Him.

A proper allegiance to Christ's person and work enables us to resist attacks. As we walk with Him a proper allegiance to Him, Christ, will enable us to resist attacks. We will not be susceptible to being deluded. We will not be tempted to being led astray but will be able to be secure because of our walk with the Lord. If we don't have a vibrant walk with the Lord then we are more susceptible to being led astray by persuasive arguments and deluded.

What happens when we have a walk with the Lord by faith and discipline? What happens? Verse seven says it this way, "**overflowing with gratitude**" we will be overflowing with gratitude, abundantly being thankful for what God has done for us. And if we are abundantly thankful for what God has done for us there will be no place for persuasive arguments leading us to something else because we will have found that what has happened to us in our life as being so overwhelming that it causes us to overflow with gratitude. That makes everything else, all these persuasive arguments that people will want to entice us to go off and do something else that appeals to our flesh, these will not ring a bell with us because we will be overflowing with gratitude. We will be so thankful for what the Lord has done in our walk with Him, our knowledge of Him, that the richness of knowing Christ will protect us from these delusions these persuasive arguments and having a connection with the fellowship we will be overflowing with gratitude for that and that will protect us.

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So, let's pray together that we can be protected from delusion. Lord, we thank You for Your word. We thank You for Your church, we thank You for being the one that instructs us through Your Word and we thank You for

the Holy Spirit that causes us to want to be responding to You. We pray that our heart would be encouraged so that we can be avoiding arguments that will be manipulating us to be led astray. And that we will not be deluded, we will not be susceptible to these arguments. That we will be firmly grounded rooted in You. Amen.