**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

**Sermon**

***Scripture Integrity – Why it Matters***

 **Colossians 2:1- 8**

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(Unless otherwise noted, NAS is quoted – New American Standard Bible)

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**Colossians 1:24** Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, . . .

**. . . 29** For this purpose also I labor,

 striving according to His power, which mightily works within me**.**

**2:1** For I want you to know how great a **struggle** I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea,

and for all those who have not personally seen my face,

**First – Observations of God’s New Testament Language**

**Why was the Greek language used instead of Hebrew to write the New Testament?**

**The short answer. . . it was ‘God ordained’.**

**2 Timothy 3:16** All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

My seminary professors, who were experts in Greek, noted that the written Greek language can be finely tuned with its grammatical structures and elements as compared to Aramaic or Hebrew. Therefore, the Greek language communicated more precisely the will of God.

We do not forget that language is dynamic (changing) with the flow of history. Above all. . . it is the heart and mind from which languages are communicated that bring about change in a person’s life.

In modern times. . . we grew-up in a mathematical naturalistic world combined with the skeptical doubting of everything that cannot be scrubbed by some kind of formula in a test tube. Meaning that “truth” in our time is ‘hard to come by’ unless it can be verified by the religion of “materialism”. This casts the pursuit of a spiritual life to be fanciful and for the well-intended but fool hearted. Therefore, letters that were combined to comprise the New Testament are all in question because they represent a spiritual life that cannot be measured in a laboratory. Atheistic-skeptics constantly attack the origins of the New Testament. My written observations hereafter is to equip the Believer (anyone) with a solid foundation of knowledge.

**We are Blessed by God**

We are blessed to have Paul’s letters in our own language being translated from the Greek language of which he wrote his letters. Paul (birth name Saul) was born (5 A.D.) in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, Anatolia (Asia Minor) region located in the modern-day province of Mersin, Turkey. Anatolia was the name given to this land by the Greeks, which means “a place of the rising sun”, because it was east of Greece. Anatolia was one of the first regions to be conquered by Alexander the Great, three hundred years before Saul was born. Therefore, the Greek language was spoken. Paul’s parents were Jewish who were Roman citizens. Latin was the language of the Romans which was spoken by their leadership and progressively learned by the people they conquered.

When Saul was about five years old (10 A.D.), his family moved to Jerusalem where the majority of the population spoke Aramaic, but a large minority communicated in Greek. A few, especially those more religious and whose lives were more aligned with the Temple, spoke Hebrew.

By 20 A.D., Saul began his studies of the Hebrew Scriptures in the city of Jerusalem under Rabbi Gamaliel. It was under Gamaliel that Saul would begin an in-depth study of the Law with the famous rabbi. The Jews possessed the Old Testament in Hebrew and the Greek Septuagint.

From these historical facts, we see that Paul grew-up in a multi-language culture. Therefore, he could communicate in Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic. Scholars believe that Paul also was exposed to Latin, the Roman state language. But the language with which he initially grew-up was Greek, the dominate language of his home region and many areas that Alexander the Great conquered.

Remember that Alexander the Great took over the Persian Empire, parts of North Africa, lands extending east to India and what we call the Holy Land (Palestine) starting in approximately 333 B.C. Therefore, three-hundred years before Jesus walked in Palestine, the Greek language had taken hold.

The Greek King over Egypt, Ptolemy Philadelphus (reigned from 285-246 BCE), commissioned a translation of the Hebrew Bible for his library in Alexandria. The term Septuagint, meaning “seventy,” (rounded off to be expressed as LXX) actually refers to the seventy-two translators—six from each tribe of Israel—involved in translating the Pentateuch from Hebrew to Greek. Most of the direct citations of the Old Testament (OT) in the New Testament match the Septuagint, not the Hebrew Bible (or Masoretic Text [MT]). There are approximately 300 OT passages that are directly quoted or strongly alluded to in the NT.

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/what-is-the-septuagint/>

 It is true that the Aramaic language was a common language of the Jews in the first century due to that language being acquired during the Babylonian Exile. However, many Jews moved to Jerusalem from geographic locations that had been conquered by Alexander and thus came from a Greek-speaking culture. Also, the Jews were familiar reading the Old Testament Scripture in Greek because of the Septuagint (LXX).

 So, there were three languages (Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic) spoken by the majority of the population in Palestine during the first century. Of these three, the Greek language could be spoken and understood by not only many Jews in Palestine but also by Jews and non-Jews (Gentiles) throughout the lands that had been conquered by Alexander. The letters of the New Testament were written to be received by a larger audience than the confines of Hebrew or Aramaic-speaking people. I see that it was providential that the Greek language was used to write the letters comprising the New Testament in order to reach the larger Greek-speaking population of that part of the world.

**Lessons in Colossians**

For today’s sermon, we start in Colossians 2:1 but reference back to 1:24, 29 to provide the context. Paul is not complaining to the Believers in Colossae about his “house arrest” in Rome to gain their sympathy. Paul is emphasizing his care and stress as if he were striving to win an athletic event. The Greek word “agono” is associated with a person who is under a great strain in an athletic contest and not a person who is in prison.

**Gingrich, Greek NT Lexicon**

**Struggle** – Greek ἀγών ἀγών, ἀγῶνος, ὁ athletic contest, race

Hebrews 12:1; struggle 1 Thessalonians 2:2 under a great strain

Philippians 1:30 fight  **Colossians 2:1** care, anxiety, concern

 From 2:1, we move to Paul’s concern about the same challenges of the church in Colossae as he sees in other assemblies. . . that is the constant threat of inaccurate teachings that perverts the original intent, meaning and application of God’s Word leading to congregational disruption and disunity. This is why he goes into detail about the elements of the Gospel Message. The local assembly must function in the truth of God’s Word and be able to accurately witness to others the truth contained in the Good News.

**2** that their **hearts** may be **encouraged,**

having been knit together in love,

[in God for God is love 1 John 4:8]

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,**

**3** in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

 **4** I say this so

 **that no one will** **delude you with persuasive argument**.

 **5** For even though I am absent in body,

nevertheless, I am with you in spirit,

rejoicing to see your good discipline

and the stability of your faith in Christ.

 **6** Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord,

so walk in Him,

 **7** having been firmly rooted

and now being built up in Him

and established in your faith,

 just as you were instructed,

and overflowing with gratitude.

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

through philosophy and empty deception,

according to the tradition of men,

according to the elementary principles of the world,

rather than according to Christ.

From these words, we can see that Paul is very concerned about false teachers and their teaching. Paul was not the only Apostle to be concerned. We read Peter’s warning. .

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. **2 Peter 2:1**

 When Paul wrote to the Galatians. . . his frustration and amazement can be realized through the vivid words with which he challenges the congregation.

**Galatians 1:6-9, 11-12**

6 I am amazed that you are so quickly **deserting Him** who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; 7 which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to **distort the gospel of Christ**.

8 But even if we, **or an angel from heaven**, should preach to you a **gospel contrary** to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!

9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

Continuing . . .

11 For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me **is not according to man**. 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, **but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.**

 So, it is the same challenges throughout history and in our time to accurately understand God’s will for our lives. From governments high-jacking. . . then twisting God’s Word for political gain. . . to spiritually misguided people gaining a following because of their charismatic personalities. . . Biblical Christianity has been a rarity. From the beginning, from the time of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. . . the Devil has twisted God’s Word to deceive people.

**Genesis 3**

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made.

And he said to the woman,

"Indeed, has God said,

'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden '?"

 2 The woman said to the serpent,

"From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat;

3 but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said,

'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'"

 4 The serpent said to the woman,

"You surely will not die! 5 "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

**What are false teachings today inside the so-called Church?**

1. God loves me. . . and His love is not exhaustible. Therefore, I

can do whatever I want, He will aways forgive me.

**Biblical Refutation**: John 14:15 "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” (John 14:21,23 15:10; 1 John 2:3, 5:3; 2 John 1:6) Romans 6:1ff What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? 2 May it never be!

1. False teachers claim that through them (as a mediator go-between) God can be accessed. These mediators use fear, guilt, greed, ritual ceremony and constant doubt to gain their congregations and keep them. Greed is listed because of the promises in the “name-it-claim-it” prosperity teachings of charlatan preachers. Sarcastically. . . we know all Apostles died wealthy/healthy men. But wait. . .why does a healthy person die?

**Biblical Refutation:** 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 8:6, 9:15, 10:10-12, 12:24.

1. You must work or perform meritorious works to gain salvation and to keep salvation. This is prevalent in the majority of churches. It is the above-mentioned mediators who decide what works must be accomplished and continued. These include water baptismal formulas, citations of creeds and meritorious works.

**Biblical Refutation:** Ephesians 2:5-8; Romans 3:24, 4:16; 2 Timothy 1:9; John 3:16; Galatians 2:16.

**Then. . . there is false teaching outside the Church** **that has been brought into the church.**

Atheists are now in the church. They have invaded the church with the desire to take over the churches and turn them into secular organizations to evoke culture change. Any so-called church who approves of/or ordains homosexuals/lesbians. . . and does not hold to the moral teachings of God including the sanctity of life. . . is the false church of the antichrist. Here is a list identifying their belief:

1. There is no God.

1. Being that there is no God. . . the Bible is irrelevant and has no authority to guide life. They write their own rules.
2. Being that there is no God. . . there is no objective morality or standards to be applied to relationships. Meaning. . . relationships between people, people and government or people with nature are all subjective to the atheistic will.
3. Being there is no God . . . people are not created. The origins of life stem

 from primordial soup that was heated and struck by lightning. . . or

 something. . . to somehow form the first living cells.

1. Being there is no God. . . life is random, undirected, meaningless and

 without purpose.

1. Being there is no God. . . ‘survival of the fittest’ rules.

Obviously, all of the above implemented in any organization will destroy that organization. **This is Why Scripture matters.**

**2 John 1:7-11**

7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world,

those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.

 8 Watch yourselves,

that you do not lose what we have accomplished,

but that you may receive a full reward.

9 Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of

Christ, does not have God;

 the one who abides in the teaching,

he has both the Father and the Son.

10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching,

do not receive him into your house,

and do not give him a greeting;

11 for the one who gives him a greeting

participates in his evil deeds.

**Scripture Integrity – Why it Matters** is the title to this sermon. God had blessed us with His written Word. In our time the Word of the Lord is written with pin and ink on paper. However, God has always desired for His Word to be an internal participant within our hearts and mind. What goes into our heart and mind rules our life. The Word became flesh and lived as one of us (John 1:14) to demonstrate that fallen humanity can possess the eternal Word of God. This is God’s will.

**Proverbs 3:1-3 1** My son, do not forget my teaching, But let your heart keep my commandments; **2** For length of days and years of life And peace they will add to you.

 **3** Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart.

**Proverbs 7:1- 3 1** My son, keep my words And treasure my commandments within you. 2 Keep my commandments and live, And my teaching as the apple of your eye. 3 Bind them on your fingers; Write them on the tablet of your heart.

**Jeremiah 31:33** "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart, I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. (Repeated in Hebrews 10:16) **AMEN**