

# Colossians 2:16-23 - Jeffrey Smith

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Preacher: Jeffrey Smith

[0:00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church, Knowing Jesus, Making Jesus Known. This morning, we continue our study on the New Testament book of Colossians.

All right, good morning everyone. Hope everyone had a great St. Patrick's Day yesterday. Teresa had a chance to go downtown with Anna and Miss Grass and got to enjoy the parade.

So I think it was a fairly good day. The weather wasn't too cold. Anybody else get out to the parade or the Dogtown parade now? All right, no, it's all right.

Well, we had an eventful day after that, well, an eventful evening. As it happens often, one of our kids got sick, and so Teresa's at home with Josiah now.

And as I was sitting back there, I was thinking about how much Teresa does for us and the kids.

And it struck me that I have no idea where the kids are right now. I didn't take them to their Sunday school class or their nursery.

[1:07] So I'm hoping that they're in the right place. They're down to sit at the outside. The mic is on, and I'm waiting for the PowerPoint. Is the PowerPoint on as well?

Can we show that first slide? All right, we've got a new clicker here. Oh, look at that. All right, we're perfect. Well, as you can see on the screen, we are going to continue on our study in Colossians 2. And I'm really excited to be sharing this. One, anytime there's a chance to speak, it's a lot of studying involved, and so it's always beneficial for the speaker.

But it is also just a great passage to share, and I think you guys will see that here in a second. So if you have your Bibles or your phones and you want to turn with me, that'd be great. Colossians 2, and when we read here in just a second, we're going to start in actually verse 13.

Before we jump in, though, let's go ahead and pray. Heavenly Father, we just thank you for another morning. Thank you for your word here that you've given to us.

[2:15] What a privilege it is that we have that. Lord, thank you for this passage, and I just pray that your message goes forth. Filter out anything that is not from you, Father.

I just pray for that. And once again, thank you for the time together here as a body. Amen. All right, well, we're going to start things off just a little differently.

We're going to start off with a picture. Okay, so what do we have up there? We have St. Louis-style barbecue pork steaks, right?

A St. Louis special. And so I'm showing that picture for a couple different reasons. One is, you know, we're getting close to the lunch hour, and so your stomachs are starting to rumble a little bit. And any time, you know, you see a picture of food, it just helps with that. But we're also getting to what I think is the meat of the passage. The meat of the passage.

[3:13] And so we have some meat up there. There's two other reasons why I have this picture up here. The other is, we are in this period right now that the Catholics call Lent.

And so Teresa and I went to a fish fry on Friday, and it was good food. But what is something that you can't eat on a Friday if you're following this Catholic Lent?

You can't eat meat, right? So would you be allowed to eat that? No. You can't eat that. You can't eat that. You can't eat any, I think I looked at the rule, because you can eat fish, obviously, and fish is a meat.

But it's warm-blooded meat, so you can't eat that. But just kind of going along those same lines, if you were a Jew in the Old Testament, could you eat that as well?

No. Because it would be considered unclean, right? The clove-toothed animal was unclean. So you'll kind of start to see where I'm going with this here in a second.

[4:11] The only thing better than that for me, since I'm not a great cook and chef overall, is having someone else to cook it for me. I was hoping Ed would be here.

I saw him earlier. But I had to go deep into the Facebook archives for that one. I don't think Ed's cooking a steak there. I think those are hot dogs. But still, I would take it from Ed.

So that's good. So we are, like I said, we're going to be looking at Colossians 2, 16 through 23 this morning. And before we jump in, let's just take a little stroll down memory lane and kind of get us caught up to speed as to what we've looked at so far.

And so it gives us good context as to what Paul is talking about in this passage. First, if you remember, Paul is writing to this fairly young church at Colossae.

And it's a church he has not visited personally. He's a bit of a spiritual grandfather because he has passed on the gospel to Epaphras.

[5:14] And Epaphras has then passed it on to Colossae and some of the surrounding cities. He kind of starts it off by saying that he's praying for them, that they would grow in spiritual wisdom, in understanding.

It says that they would walk in a manner worthy of pleasing the Lord, bearing fruit in their good works. And then he goes into this kind of reminder where he's reminding the church that Christ is the preeminent one.

That Christ is the head of the body, the head of the church. He is the firstborn of all creation. And then he goes on in chapter 2, where he goes on to encourage the believers there to walk with Jesus.

To, I think we had this illustration of the root, the tree growing. And that root has been established in the gospel. They have believed in the gospel. They have been, they are saved in that faith.

And now it is time for that seed to grow. It also makes reference to the debt has been paid and the law has been satisfied.

[6:25] Which is important. And we'll get to that here in a second. So, like I said, this is what I believe is kind of the start of the meat and potatoes of the passage. We have had the appetizer.

We have had the salad. It is now time to get into some of the good stuff. And this is where Paul kind of takes a pivot from the introduction into what I would call the warning.

The warning. And just to be very upfront, because I think it's helpful to kind of see how he breaks this down before we jump into the passage and read it. But there are three warnings that Paul is giving to the Colossian church.

The first, and this is where we're going to spend most of our time, the first is in the warning against legalism. The second is a warning against mysticism.

And the third is a warning against asceticism. Most of you probably know what legalism is. Most of you can probably figure out what mysticism is just based on the word.

[7:36] Asceticism may be a new term. I wasn't too familiar with it. But we'll define that here in a second and give you an idea of what Paul is talking about. So, if you have your Bible, let's go ahead and read Colossians 2, 16 through 23.

And again, let's start actually in verse 13. 13, because if you know, 16 starts with a therefore. What do we say when we see the therefore? What's the therefore there for?

So, we might as well just start at 13, right? Give us some context. So, let's read. And think about those three warnings as we're going through it. And you who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.

This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in him. Here's our passage.

Therefore, let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.

[8:50] These are a shadow of things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Let no one disqualify you insisting on asceticism and worship of

angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, 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.

If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations? Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch, referring to things that all perish as they are used, according to human precepts and teachings.

These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

Did you start to get a sense of the three warnings that Paul has given this church? So to start, and I'll give you some context here, we're going to go through the three warnings, legalism, mysticism, asceticism, and then we're going to draw this, we're going to bring this back to ourselves.

And I will be very upfront with you right now, I may have a little bit of a tough time articulating the application piece. And you'll see kind of in a second what I mean by that, but as we're kind of going through this, you may say, hey, legalism is something that I think is very applicable to me, mysticism may not be as much, asceticism may not be as much, but ultimately there is application for us here.

[10:48] So hang with me, we're going to go through those three things and then end it with an application. So legalism, if you're not fully aware, the definition of legalism is any doctrine which states salvation comes strictly from adherence to the law.

And if you remember, you know, Paul, when he talks about legalism, because it comes up a lot, he uses terms like bondage, he uses terms like the yoke upon the neck, and if you remember, who was the group that was really infiltrating and having this negative influence on the church?

It was the Gnostics, right? The Gnostics who felt like they knew things that were not in the scriptures. And they had this weird mix of this like oriental, far east mythology coming in as they were kind of right along this trade route between Europe and Asia.

And they have some of the Jewish traditions that are in play. They have some of the Christian teaching, some odd philosophies. So there's just this hodgepodge of all these different teachings, which explains why the threat is kind of this three-pronged approach.

And you'll see that here in a second. So there's rules pertaining to, this is kind of going back to the Jewish legalism, but they have rules about what you can eat and what you can drink, and the festivals, and how you handle the Sabbath, and new moons, and this and that.

[12:13] And they're just trying to put more rules on this young church. These believers here have put their faith in the gospel.

They're established at a church. They're trying to grow in this church. And suddenly they're being met with this pressure from these Gnostics to do certain things.

And it's legalism. And so we know if we just kind of briefly glance back, you know, Jesus put an end to this unclean food, clean food, in Mark 7.

We know in Acts 10, Peter has this vision about the food and is saying, oh, this food's unclean. And the Lord says, do not call anything impure that God has made clean.

Going back to the example I just gave, it's very similar to saying, you can't eat meat on Friday, right? You see some comparisons there. They're just trying to throw the rules at these folks and saying, we're going to disqualify you if you continue to do these things.

[13:21] And then when you go back to the issue of days, right, how do you handle the Sabbath? Are you going to the festivals? Are you observing the new moon? And, you know, we all know, like, the list of rules that, you know, was being put on the Jews during the Sabbath.

This is actually one of my, I enjoy this exercise to kind of go back and read some of the rules and regulations on the Sabbath. It can almost be comical. And a couple of them that always stand out to me is there's one about you can't pluck a gray hair.

As I get more and more gray hairs, you can't pluck a gray hair on the Sabbath because that's work. But the other one that I think is really kind of far-fetched is if you are missing a leg and you have this wooden prosthetic leg, you can't wear it on a Sabbath because if that wooden prosthetic leg were to fall and someone were to pick it up for you, that would be carrying wood and that would be

considered work.

Right? This stuff is just so absurd. But that's what these Gnostics were trying to do. They were trying to infiltrate this young church and saying, you're not doing this, you're not doing that. And here's a question that I want to just kind of throw out there and this will be something that we kind of end with at the end for application. Some of these things are not necessarily how I would say the most cut and dry.

[14:40] Meaning, the Gnostics were not coming in and saying, hey, Colossian Church, you guys really shouldn't be murdering people. You know? And they're like, whoa, don't put that on me, you legalistic people.

No, they were kind of throwing in some things that maybe the Colossian Church kind of fell into a gray area. And so we're going to address that at the end.

Because there are certain things that are very obvious. This is sin. I shouldn't be doing this. Right? But what about this? Someone comes to you and says, hey, have you thought about doing this? Hey, have you thought about not doing that?

Have you thought about, you know, whatever it may be. And you have to make a decision. Like, are they right? Are they not right? You know, like, where should my mindset be?

That will, that's going to be kind of the big question we address at the end. As you can see up here, Paul refers to these rules and regulations as a shadow.

[15:33] Right? A shadow that kind of points towards the real substance that is Christ. The law does nothing other than reveal sin. It has no power to redeem you.

It has no power to prevent sin. Only grace can do that. But here's the question. This is an effective, this can be an effective tactic from the devil.

And you would think, why would a church that has suddenly been freed from all the Jewish regulation, why would they be tempted to go back to the law? Right?

So on the surface, we would all agree with that. Right? It seems foolish to, like, want to go back to the law. But deep down, do we know we do that? Yeah, we do do that.

The flesh will pull us that direction. I have a good story I'm going to share in just a second here. But before I jump to it, why do we like that? Why do we like the law? Why do we like to go back to it?

[16:36] Why do I see more and more, like, Protestant Christians, like, celebrating Lent and things like that? And I'll mention a couple reasons why. I think one is it can inflate our ego.

Because you're saying, hey, here's the religious routine. Here's the measurement. If you meet this measurement or you exceed this measurement, you've got to be feeling pretty good.

Or maybe it makes you content in your self-righteousness. But ultimately, we don't measure up to Christ.

Right? We don't measure up to Christ. But our flesh is weak and often will pull our desires back to religious duties. Does that make sense so far as far as, on paper it seems crazy that we would want to go back from the freedom we have in Christ to the slavery and the bondage of the law but our flesh brings us back.

Our flesh brings us back. And so here's the story I wanted to share. This was from the Post-Dispatch this week. Did anybody else see this article? Okay.

[17:49] Bob read it, saw it because it's part of the Law and Order section of the Post-Dispatch. So it fits in well. Well, if you can't read it, the title says, I couldn't relate. St. Louis man who robbed bar to get sent back to prison explains why being free was so hard.

So, this man, his name is Paul Barone. And those pictures are both of Paul Barone. One is of Paul Barone in 1978. And that is when he decided to kill a girl from Bishop to Burg, stabbed her to death because she would not go on a date with him.

And Paul Barone was sentenced sentenced to 39 years in prison. Almost four decades in prison.

And in February or March of this year, Rob, I'm sorry, Paul, had served his full prison sentence and he was set free.

And so, Paul, they literally told the story of giving him some money and taking him to the bus stop and he was on his way. It's a long story but if you want to read it, it should be on the Post-Dispatch

still. And, you know, he jumps around between a couple houses and ultimately, after 26 days, he says, I don't want to do this anymore.

I want to go back to prison. So, he takes the Metrolink to Clayton. He gets off at, you know, one of the stops and goes to the first bar he sees. He puts his shirt or his hand under his shirt, acts like he has a gun, robs the bar.

[19:26] The bartender gives him the money and then he says, okay, now you can call the police and the bartender's confused. You just, I just gave you the money, you can go now. And he's like, no, just call the police. And they do and they arrest him.

And so, so Paul is headed back to prison and so the interesting thing is this. They, they interviewed Paul and they said, why is it that you wanted to go back to prison?

You've just spent 39 years in there you are finally free. Why do you want to go back? And he said this very plainly, in prison, someone else decides when you eat.

Someone else decides when you leave your cell. Someone else decides when you take a shower. There is structure in prison. And while, you know, it's not a, a totally similar example to, to what, you know, we as believers deal with, I think it gives very good insight into some of the comfort and contentment that can come from being in prison and being under the law.

Right? This guy had his freedom and said, no, I'd rather just go back to the, to prison where they tell me what to do. I know what I'm doing. I, I, you know, it's just, it's just easier that way. And I feel like sometimes you see that, especially with people that are, you know, maybe on their deathbed and they've, they've been following a man-made religion and you finally, and you tell them, the man-made religion is not going to get you to heaven.

[20:55] It is by faith in Christ. And that can be such a tough pill to swallow. Right? Because for so long, like Paul, they've lived in the confinement of the law and there's comfort in that and there's familiarity in that and it's like the thought of like that being set aside and having freedom in Christ, it's like, oh man, that like just doesn't sit well with me.

The basis of our freedom is the person and the work of Jesus Christ. And earlier in Colossians 2, we're told that Christ canceled our debt and its legal demands.

And that's a big deal. That's something that we don't always appreciate. At our work, we have a collections department. You know, when a client enters into a contract with us and they don't fulfill the contract and it goes to this group, like working out like unpaid debt is a nasty situation.

Right? No one wants to be involved in that. And in our situation, we couldn't pay back that debt. So it was a very, very bad situation. And Christ came in and canceled that debt and satisfied those legal demands.

Romans 16 reminds us that we are under grace. as believers as believers are under grace and not under the law. And just in closing on to this legalism part, I would almost say that the person judging the believer, the Gnostics judging the believer in this case, they're almost the ones that are more guilty of legalism because they are telling these young believers, listen, I know, you know, Jesus died on the cross and rose again and I know you believe in that.

[22:41] But to really, really be justified and to really, really grow in that walk with the Lord, you've got to stop eating that and you've got to start doing this and you've got to start observing the Sabbath this way because that's what really satisfies that is totally false.

That is totally false and it is more on the accuser than, you know, the young believer struggling with that. Sometimes I feel like we, you know, maybe it's Bethel, maybe, I don't know, maybe it's everywhere, but, you know, there's a lot of time spent talking about right doctrine and filtering out false doctrine and focusing on the gospel and you say, is this overkill?

Like, are we, you know, should we kind of like branch out and really focus on some other things? But then you realize how much Paul spends in focusing on that in his letters and Galatians 3 is a perfect example.

You could almost put this in Colossians and say, this is the exact same thing that's happening. It says, O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified.

Let me ask you only this. Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Hint, the answer is hearing with faith.

[24:01] Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Obviously, a rhetorical question at the end. We're not being perfected by the flesh.

We're not being perfected by the flesh. So the second warning that Paul gives the church is mysticism. And mysticism is the belief that a person can have an immediate experience with the spiritual world apart from God or the Holy Spirit.

And I'm not going to spend as much time on mysticism and asceticism, but I will just make a couple quick points. One is, as you can see, it says, let no one disqualify you.

And the Greek word for disqualify, it's to like declare unworthy of a prize and even to take it further, it's a bit of an athletic term, meaning you have done something to break the rules and so therefore you are not allowed to compete in the contest.

Think about the Olympics, think about, you know, performance enhancing drugs. When an athlete is found to have taken those, they are what? They're disqualified. So the, what I would say here is this, the Gnostics were coming in and they were saying, and I love how they were trying to play it off in a very kind of humble way saying, we're not good enough to go directly to God.

[25:32] So why don't we kind of take this alternative route and we're going to be praying to some angels and then the angels will kind of intercede for us to Jesus, to God, and we're going to kind of take that path.

And so, the believers were opening themselves up to some very real demonic activity. and they were trying to pray to angels and spirits.

Satan, I'll just make this comment, Satan knows how to give a counterfeit experience. And, you know, it says in 1 Corinthians that he will often disguise himself as light or as something good.

And, this is one that I would say maybe you would disagree, but I don't know if it's as prevalent as it is, you know, then as it is now in our culture, maybe in other countries it's more prevalent.

I don't know, I seem to be corrected there. I know you'll definitely see fortune tellers and palm readers and Ouija boards and, you know, just things that I would just say don't dabble in, don't even touch.

[26:47] the reason is is we have a, we have a high priest in Jesus that we can go to directly. It says in Hebrews 4, since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the son of God, let us hold fast to our confession, for we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness.

Don't you love that? We have a high priest that is able to sympathize with our weakness, but on the other hand has not fallen into sin, but who in every respect has been tempted as we are yet without sin.

I love, I love 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.

There is no need to go to an intercessor. We can go directly to Jesus. How awesome is that? I think that is probably one of the most underrated things, underappreciated things for myself as a believer. And these Gnostics were going to the Christian church saying, you know, we are just not good enough to go directly to Jesus, but then it says that they were being puffed up, where does it say that here, puffed up at the end of 18, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind.

[28:15] So this was actually a point of pride. They felt like they had figured something out that no one else had known. Trying to reach God through anyone else besides his son Jesus is idolatry.

Jesus is the one and only mediator. Opposed mysticism by keeping in fellowship with the head, Christ. And that was the mistake.

The Gnostics were not in close fellowship with the head. We see earlier in chapter 2 that Paul reminds the church that Christ is the head, the whole fullness of deity, the head of all rule and authority.

And the last warning is asceticism. And asceticism is the practice of, let me pull it up here, the practice of rigorous self denial and even self mortification in order to become more spiritual.

And so, very similar to legalism, but almost think there were like a bunch of rules and regulations that they were trying to follow, more so for the effect of like if they were denying self and kind of hurting themselves, it was going to create a greater spiritual experience.

[29:36] And so, what would they do? They would do things like they wouldn't eat for a long time, they wouldn't, they would go without sleep, they would sleep on hard beds, which made me think of a couple conversations we had earlier.

They would whip themselves, they would not, this is crazy, they would not speak for days, and it says in the commentary sometimes even years. So, that's interesting.

And so, obviously, there's a connection between legalism and asceticism. Don't do this, don't touch that, don't taste this. And so, the entire, the ascetic's entire life is wrapped up in this system of rules. Yeah, so I'll leave it at that. It's this, you know, they were trying to put, these rules on the Colossian church saying, not only should you observe the Sabbath in certain ways and don't eat unclean food and you should be praying to angels and spirits instead of Jesus and God directly, you should also be, like, hurting yourself in order to, like, better experience a relationship with the Lord.

I think it's actually interesting because Paul writes about enjoying, or it says in 1 Timothy, God richly provides us with everything for enjoyment. So, like, some that like to say that, like, and maybe correct me if I'm wrong, but it can almost feel like there is a, there are certain camps out there that would almost say, if you have an enjoyment in your life, there is overindulgence and you should not have that.

[31:19] But the truth is, you know, God provides things for our enjoyment. men. And so, I would just kind of make that point. So, in closing, I would, I just wanted to bring this back to some application.

And I kind of labeled this last slide, should I or should I not? Should be a pretty straightforward question, right? But again, put yourselves in the shoes of a young believer who's being told, like, wow, you should really be, like, not eating that or, you know, you should really be kind of doing this on the Sabbath.

Do you guys kind of get how that could be a little confusing? Like, should I or should I not? And so, I've written down just a few questions and again, like, I'm not trying to be, I'm not trying to be legalist and saying you have to follow these questions in order to, like, make a decision.

These are, this is just food for thought, not a comprehensive list. Maybe you want to add to it, maybe you want to kind of remove a couple points. But the first thing I would just say, if you're coming up with a decision, and I have an example, actually.

An example is this. A year or two ago, and I don't mean to pick on it, but Target announced that they were going to, like, let guys go in the girls' bathroom and vice versa. And there were a lot of Christians that said, I'm not going to shop a Target.

[32:37] Well, should I or should I not? It's not the 11th commandment that I should not shop a Target, right? So, the question is, should I or should I not?

You can apply this to a lot of different things. You know, maybe someone comes up to you and says, you know, you really shouldn't have that beard there. You know, or there's a good example on R.C.

Sproul's website of the girl that was always told, like, you should never wear lipstick. And so, like, she grew up and it was like, should I wear lipstick or should I not wear lipstick? Do you guys kind of get the types of questions that we're hoping to address?

Okay. So, the first one is fairly simple. I don't know if you can read it, but it's, fairly easy. Is it sin? Okay? Is it sin?

If the answer is yes, then don't do it. All right? Pretty straightforward. And when I say, is it sin, I know it's, is it very cut and dry?

[33:33] Meaning, if you come to me and say, hey, listen, you know, like going back to the example of, like, I'm thinking about murdering someone. I don't want to be legalistic about it, but like, what do you think?

Like, the answer is, it's a sin. Don't do it. You know, if you're like, hey, you know, I'm struggling with pornography, like, should I keep, should I keep looking at that or should I not? Like, no, it's a sin.

Don't have lust in your heart. Don't, don't do that. Okay? So, the question is, if it's, if it's, if it's, if you're looking at it and saying, well, I'm not sure if going to Target is a sin. I, I don't know. The next question I would just simply ask yourself is, are you in God's word and in prayer?

And maybe you can attest to this, but I know for myself, when I am not in God's word and I am not in prayer, I'm a much different person. And it's not a good thing.

You can ask my wife, like, there's, there's probably a notable difference from when I am in the word and, and from the times that I'm not. I talked to my father-in-law, John, about this yesterday, just the thought of the conscious and how kind of this plays into it.

[34:35] I'm not going to go deep into it, but, you know, we're all given a conscious, believers and unbelievers, and, and it says that we are given an idea of what's right and wrong in this conscious, okay? And then on one end of the conscious, you have the flesh tugging at it, and on the other end, for, as believers, we have the Holy Spirit, right?

The Holy Spirit guiding us into what's right, and you have the flesh pulling us back into our old ways. As an unbeliever, you don't have the Holy Spirit. You just have the flesh tugging at that, and it constantly sears that, that, that conscious.

But, you know, as Paul said, if you, if you're walking in the Spirit, and you're in communion with, with the Lord, and you are in prayer, in, in His Word, it's such a great thing. We have a clear conscious. And so the next question is, am I acting in faith, or, uh, or works of the law?

Meaning, like, am I going to Target because I think it's going to, like, help me get to heaven? Do I think it's going to, like, make me look good in front of my, my friends? Am I going there because I think it's going to, like, or am I, am I avoiding it, I should say, for those reasons?

Am I avoiding it because I think it's going to, like, draw me closer to the Lord? Like, those, I would say, would be more in the, in the works of the law category. And then the last one is just, or not the last one, the second last one is, am I causing a brother to stumble?

[35:49] I love Romans 14. It says, let us, therefore, make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food.

All food is clean. We heard about that earlier. But it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall.

If you're like, hey, you know, I have this, this, this beer, I want to have this beer, and, you know, I don't think it's a sin, and it's in, it's in faith, and I'm in the word, and I got my friend right here who's just a recovering alcoholic, and I should really not have this beer in front of them because that may cause them to stumble.

I would probably not do it, right? I would probably not do it. And then the last thing I would just say is, does your conscience approve? So continuing on in Romans 14, it says, so whatever you believe about these things, keep between yourself and God.

Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves, but whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat because their eating is not from faith, and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

[37:01] Does that clear as mud? Does that make sense? If you're kind, if you've gone through these things, and you're saying this is not, you know, an obvious sin in the Bible, and this is, and I'm in fellowship with the Lord, this is done in faith, I'm not causing a brother to stumble, and your conscience approves, you know, eat the meat.

Eat the meat. If the musicians want to come on up, we'll close here. Heavenly Father, we just thank you for, again, your word, and just, you know, the warnings that you had given to Paul to give to the Colossian church.

We thank you for these things, because even though they were a couple thousand years ago, Lord, they are still relevant for us today. And, you know, we still fall back to this desire to want to be under the law.

Lord, and we just ask that you remind us that we are under grace, Father. Our relationship with you is not dependent on things that we do.

Our growth in that relationship with you is not dependent on the law. The power over sin is not given to us under the law, Lord.

[38:22] It is from you. It is from the Holy Spirit that you give us as believers. And we thank you for that, Lord. I pray that you just clarify this for anyone that may have confusion in their mind.

Again, I pray that your message was sent forth, Lord. And we just thank you again for this time in your son's name. Amen.