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The Body of Christ

Readings for the Week

Acts 1-2

Philippians 1

Galatians 1-6

Jesus Christ came and died for us and was raised on the third day. In light of these earth-shaking events, the world was never the same. The early church struggled to figure out how to live in a new way since the gospel was changing everything.

Have you ever experienced a life-changing event that made you reevaluate how you live? What sort of event was it? How did it change you?

If you moved away from home and family, got married, or started a new job, how did you decide what traditions or habits you would continue and what you would do differently?

The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ changed the world. The early church recognized that and struggled to figure out what it meant for the way they should live. Questions arose about what old things should remain and what new practices should begin.

Colossians 2:16-19

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. These are a shadow of the 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.

*What old practices are put to rest because they find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ?
What new practices were some trying to require of new believers?*

What sort of guideline does Paul give for discerning the way to live?

It can be difficult to discern the way the church should exist, but one thing is certain. Paul is clear that he wants the church to hold fast to Jesus Christ and look to him for direction. Read Colossians 3:1-17 for more guidance on how to live this out.

We all have a limited attention span, but so much in life tries to take over. What things compete for your attention? How can we better make Jesus, and the things above, our focus?

What advice does Paul give in verses 12-17 for how we can live seeking Jesus?

A pressing issue for the churches in Galatia was circumcision, but as it is with many controversial practices, it isn't just one thing that is at stake. Paul wants to frame the argument in a way that shows that what we do reflects on what believe Jesus Christ has done, and that makes it all the more important. Read Galatians 2:15-3:9.

Some were demanding that certain Jewish practices continue in order to be a part of the new community in Christ. How does Paul respond to this?

What is the larger issue behind circumcision? What is Paul trying to argue? If circumcision is what is necessary and what saves, what is the implication?

Christ's work is completely sufficient for us, but that does not mean that he hasn't prepared work for us to do. These works may be difficult and can lead us into hard circumstances. Paul knows much about this and shares that with the church in Philippians. Read Philippians 1:27-2:11 for Paul's teaching on how the church should prepare itself to face hardships.

How does Paul want the church to live? What should characterize Christians and the church, and why? What is the model for our life?

In all that we do, we ought to live with the mind of Christ. Jesus is the one who humbled himself to come to us and even humbled himself to the point of death. How can the church follow his lead, even patterning our life on the crucifixion?

