

Tribal Conversion, Part 2

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Tribal Identity, Part 2
Colossians 2.8-23

We are creatures of community built to belong; hardwired to gather in smaller, highly relational groups or tribes. We share a similar worldview with our tribe. We appreciate the same things, hope for the same things and fear the same things. Our tribe helps us form our identity and provides rituals and traditions that strengthen that identity. Finally, our tribe helps us answer the big questions in life.

The message of Colossians is build your tribe on the Gospel.

- The Gospel is not an entrance exam.
- The Gospel is not the promise of eternal life to those who repeat the correct words.
- The Gospel is the declaration that Jesus is Lord.

The church built on the Gospel:

Christians are the body of Christ, His presence on earth. Jesus is the head and he leads the church by means of the Holy Spirit. That leading is a group activity. Our rituals and traditions enforce this philosophy and provide identity.

Verses 2.6-7:

- The theme of Colossians: live just as you publicly received Christ.

Verse 2.8:

- Paul addresses syncretism.
- Three things choke out the Gospel: Elemental spiritual forces, hollow and deceptive philosophy and human tradition.
- “Elemental spiritual forces” is the key concept. The Greek word *stoichea* is the issue. It can mean basic principles, basic religious principles and/or personal spiritual beings. Paul means the third one

here. There are personal evil forces which seek to subvert the impact of the Gospel.

Verses 2.9-14:

- There are two sides to grace. We enjoy the fullness of Christ who has created a new tribe of grace.
- Christ defeated the powers and authorities, the stoichea, on our behalf.
- Grace precedes obedience.

Verses 15-23:

- False holiness is the enemy of the Gospel. It is the thing used by stoichea to subvert the Gospel in our lives.