

“WHEN FOODIES RULE”

Colossians 2:6-19 July 27, 2025

According to Google, a "**foodie**" is someone with a strong interest and enthusiasm for food, going beyond simply eating to appreciating the culinary arts, exploring different cuisines, and seeking out new and interesting dining experiences. They are curious about ingredients, cooking techniques, and the stories behind the food they eat.

Foodies are not just interested in eating, but also in the entire food experience, including preparation, presentation, and the cultural context of food. They appreciate a wide range of flavors, aromas, and textures, and are often eager to try new exotic dishes.

I don't know if I would label myself a foodie but one of the features, I miss about living in the big city is the variety of restaurants. There was German, Mexican, Indian, Chinese, Italian, Brazilian grill, BBQ, Sushi, Piada Street Food, and Middle Eastern restaurants, all within easy driving distances. On top of that, there was the 25th Street marketplace. This was an old railroad station converted into a food station. On the weekends there were rows of fresh produce brought in from the local farms. In the building itself were multiple booths with everything from seafood to cow tongue, baklava to football size gyros. If you like eating a variety of food, the big city is the place to be. Perhaps I am a bit of a foodie.

However, does one really need that great variety of food to live? Well, no, not really. When it comes down to it, all a person really needs is

some protein, plant base carbs, and good fats. No matter how you dress food up, a simple diet will suffice.

We don't know if Paul was a foodie. Most likely he ate a simple diet. Coincidentally, his gospel message in this letter to the Colossians is fairly simple too. Paul tells the church all you need in your spiritual diet is Christ Jesus. Apparently, there were some teachings that were unsettling this new church. Their message was that Christ was not enough, that Christ was not unique, and the people needed other powers, religious practices, and secret knowledge to advance in Spirituality. Paul calls these teachings nonsense, stating that Jesus is more than enough, warning the church not to be led astray from its center.

Perhaps we need to hear that message in this day and age more than ever. Have we so Americanized Jesus to fit our cultural comfort level to the point he is no longer the Christ of scripture? Have we bought into the notion that all belief systems are the same? Have we made Jesus into a political pawn to justify our own actions and opinions? How would Paul respond to our view of Jesus?

I. WHO IS THIS JESUS AND WHAT HAS HE DONE?

One of the most successful black women in entertainment is Oprah Winfrey. She is an actress, producer, author and media proprietor having built a multibillion-dollar business. She is best known for her talk show, the **Oprah Winfrey Show**, which ran from 1986 to 2011. Oprah is ranked one of the most influential people in the world.

By the mid-1990s, Winfrey had reinvented her show with a focus on literature, self-improvement, mindfulness, and spirituality. She became the Queen of self-help ideas and spiritual practices like gratitude, prayer, and presence. Oprah Winfrey's spirituality centered on the belief that a connection to something larger than oneself, often referred to as "spirit," is essential for a fulfilling life.

Now I have nothing against the practices of gratitude, prayer, or presence. I think Oprah has helped many people. But it's not enough. I too believe in something bigger than myself, but it's not enough. Practices and powers are not enough to save me and transform me and hold me accountable and direct my path. I need a person not a philosophy. I need God. I need Jesus and he is more than enough.

Paul writes, **“Watch out that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental principles of the world, and not according to Christ.”** Human-made religions and philosophy are not enough.

Just to make things clear, Paul tells us who Jesus is. **“For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority.”**

Paul claims, as did the other disciples, that Jesus is God in the flesh. Jesus is not a demi-god, not a picture of God, not a teacher about God, not another way to live. Jesus is God. On top of that, Jesus is the CEO of the Universe. There is no higher authority or power. All accounts begin and end with Christ.

If these statements are true, if Jesus is the unique Son of the Living God, what more do we need? We are connected to the highest being in the universe, who is also a historical reality. We don't need to dress our faith up in anything fancy. If these claims are not true, then Christianity is the biggest hoax in history, and we are wasting our time here this morning.

II. EVEN BETTER NEWS

In 1997, the Good News Network® began as an antidote to the barrage of negativity experienced in the mainstream media. Because of its long history, staying power, and public trust, GNN is #1 on Google for *good news*. Their website, has an archive of 21,000 positive news stories from around the globe, confirms what people already know—that good news itself is not in short supply; the broadcasting of it is.

I think Paul good have been a reporter for the Good New Network. Not only does he tell us the good news of who Jesus is, he goes on to tell us the good news of what Jesus has done for us.

1. Marked with a spiritual circumcision. Circumcision was the outward sign that one belonged to the chosen people of Israel. Paul claims in Christ we gentiles have been marked with a spiritual circumcision, namely the Holy Spirit, that dwells in us and claims us as God's very own. We don't have to run to the tattoo shop or take any action to receive this claim.

2. Made Spiritually Alive – We were spiritually dead in our separation from God because of sin. Just as Jesus was physically dead, our faith in him unites us his death. Just as Jesus was made alive from the dead, our

faith in him unites in his resurrected life. That which used to separate us can do so no longer.

3. Forgave our trespasses

a. **Erasing the record** –The ancient world used papyrus and vellum to write on. However the ink they used was on the surface, it never soaked into the material. Because these materials were expensive, people would take a sponge soaked in oil and erase the paper, then reuse it. Kind of like our dry erase boards. Paul claims Jesus got rid of our rap sheet or police record. Whatever our past wrongs were, they are erased, no longer held against us. **Our record is expunged.**

b. **Nailing it to the cross** – Another practice of the ancient world was when a law or ordinance was cancelled it was fastened to a board with a nail driven clean through it, thus making the law null and void. **What an image for the cross!** The nails of Christ nailed the legal laws and penalties against us are now null and void.

4. Disarmed the rulers and authorities and triumphed over them.

In other words, whoever or whatever had any claim on you is dissolved, because Christ's claim on us takes precedence. No matter what or who has tried to control or define you in the past, their power is broken. We are now claimed as a child of the living God and no one can take that away from us.

Paul proclaims, **“And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him...”** Christ did all of this for us before we even had faith in him.

Everything was accomplished by Jesus and Jesus alone, without any help from us. In other words, all of this was a sheer act of God's grace. Jesus is more than enough.

III. GET ROOTED

Do any of you remember the poem **Trees** by **Joyce Kilmer**? Maybe you learned it in school.

Trees

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

**A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;**

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

**A tree that may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;**

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

**Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree**

Joyce Kilmer loved trees, and he gave us a beautiful image of a tree lifting its branches to God in prayer. Kilmer's tree would understand the words of Paul to the Colossians: **"As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving."**

After hearing about who Jesus is and all Jesus has done for us, the question is, what do we do now? Paul says, “**Get Rooted and continue to walk with him.**” Almost all the nourishment comes from the roots of a tree, nutrition, water, and connection with other trees. So what are we supposed to do? How do we stay rooted in Christ?

1. **Talk with Jesus.** Listen and pay attention just like you would a good friend. Jesus already know us intimately so there is no need to hide.
2. **Invite Jesus** to be a part of each task, goal, decision, attitude, relationship, and area of your life.
3. **Study and live** out the teachings of Jesus. I am always struck by the simplicity of Jesus’ teaching and life. Yet, the profound implications of that teaching and life run deep. I found a wonderful summary of those teachings and placed them in your bulletins. You don’t have to be a highly educated scholar to live in these ways. And there are other teachings you could add to the list.
 - a. **Nine key teachings of Jesus. An unorthodox faith by Kurt Struckmeyer.** Radical love, lavish generosity, extravagant forgiveness, inclusive hospitality, compassionate action, selfless service, a passion for justice, creative nonviolence, simple living.
4. **Commit to a small group of Christians to travel with.** Serve and encourage and give and learn from each other. Just as trees network their roots to survive so must we.

In one way our faith is pretty simple. **Trust, know, imitate and serve Jesus Christ. It is enough.** Some might argue well about **theology and the**

thoughts of deep thinkers. I'm all for the reading of good theology if helps us to trust, know, imitate and serve Jesus Christ. But knowing complex thoughts about Jesus is not necessary.

What about **spiritual practices**? Aren't they valuable? Indeed they can be, as long as the practice helps me to deepen my trust, knowledge, imitation, and service with Jesus Christ, and don't become an end unto themselves.

Shouldn't we engage in **issues of social justice and lift the burdens of others**? Absolutely, as long as we imitate Christ in our serving, respect the Other, and trust in his power to transform lives and guide us.

Aren't we to engage in **worship** and the praise of God. Yes, I believe God loves praise that comes from a pure heart, that draws us near to God, and deepens our trust, knowledge, imitation and service to Christ. Be careful worship doesn't become all about us. All spiritual practices should point to and end in Christ.

Jesus once said, **"I am the vine and you are the branches. Remain in me as I remain in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me."** Let us walk with Christ and work on our roots. Amen.

First Presbyterian Church in Hawley

Sunday, July 27, 2025

Second Scripture Lesson

Colossians 2:6-19

⁶As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

⁷Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

⁸Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

⁹For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

¹⁰And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

¹¹In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

¹²Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

¹³And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

¹⁴Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us,

which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

¹⁵And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

¹⁶Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

¹⁷Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

¹⁸Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

¹⁹And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be To God.