“The Fullness of God” – Pr Jim Sprengle – The Last Sunday of the Church Year
November 23, 2025

I. **Colossians 1:13-20 –** previously read

II. **Have you ever** noticed that something in our hearts pushes against authority?
   a. Even the sweetest people you’ve ever met can be stubborn and rebellious in their own way.
      i. Some people just say it outright… “No, I’m not doing that…” while others just ignore or put off the thing they don’t want to do without saying a word.
      ii. It might be ignoring advice from others, including family, friends, or doctors… or maybe “forgetting” what they were told to do.
   b. I also remember being a teenager and how I started to push against authority and the people in charge of me.
      i. As we grow up, it’s healthy to want some independence…
      ii. Soon enough, this desire to be our own person changes how we see our parent’s rules… and we feel like they are overbearing or unfair.
   c. None of us like to admit that we bristle when someone tells us what to do…
      i. Yet, how do you feel when someone directs you to, “wait!” “stop!” “come here!”, or “go that way!”
      ii. When we went to an art museum in California, there was a very interesting exhibit that drew you in to the paintings… suddenly my staring at the painting was interrupted by a volunteer telling me to “step back!” as I looked down at the taped line I had crossed.
         1. Maybe you remember the comedian Steve Martin used to say, “Well, excuuuuuuuse me!” – I thought about saying that to her, but then just apologized and kept looking at the art from behind the tape… as directed.
   d. The fact is that we all began our lives in the “domain of darkness” – which means that we are conceived and born in sin.
      i. The sin that began with Adam and Eve was born out of rebellion and doing what <u>they</u> wanted more than what <u>God</u> commanded.
      ii. With one act of disobedience, sin became our problem… we inherited the sin that’s been passed along through the generations.
      iii. Sin wells up in us and we bristle at authority… we rebel against being told what to do… and that includes the 10 Commandments and God’s will for our lives.

III. **The Colossian church had an authority problem too**.
   a. Although Paul had never been to Colossae when he spent time nearby in the City of Ephesus, he wrote this letter to them from Rome under house arrest.
   b. He heard that they were questioning some of the basic principles of Scripture and who Jesus was, so he gave them a clear understanding.

i. In the next chapter he says things like, “See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit,” (2:8) and “Let no one disqualify you.” (2:18)
ii. False teachers were rejecting the authority of God, just as Adam and Eve did when they desired the knowledge from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil… and the results were a disaster.

c. Paul is very clear that Jesus Christ is the ultimate authority and Savior… and that He is the one we listen to.
d. The point is that the Colossians had come to faith by God’s Word, and rather than continue on that path, they were questioning it and in turn, they were questioning the authority of Jesus.
    i. But what does Jesus tell us? He says things like:
    ii. “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” John 14:15
    iii. “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love…” John 15:10
    iv. “If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples.” John 8:31
    v. “Why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?” Luke 6:46-47
e. We may love God and profess that Jesus is our Savior, but when we have an authority problem from the sin in us… we may also stubbornly reject His Word and His will for our lives.

IV. **What are the commandments** and the word that Jesus expects us to keep?
a. That is a fair question, because some people might wonder what God expects of us… and the best part is His commands are based in love.
b. The Ten Commandments have two parts, as the first three are about loving God, while the remaining seven are about loving each other.
    i. These are loving instructions which all of us should remember by heart… and knowing what it means not to break them and how to keep them.
    ii. Jesus kept these perfectly, and He even made them more demanding than ever when He preached the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapters 5-7…
    iii. Can you imagine, most people can’t even say what all the commandments are… let alone God’s will for us in these instructions.
    iv. Jesus doesn’t put some kind of <u>new</u> burden on us, He takes us <u>all the way back</u> to God’s will from the beginning.
c. Yet Jesus also speaks of “keeping My word,” not only “My commandments.”
    i. His word includes everything He has taught: His call to repent, His promise to forgive, His command to believe, His instruction to pray, His command to love one another, His warnings against sin, His call to baptism and His supper, His command to be His witnesses, and His comfort for the weary and broken.

ii. These are found in the pages of your Bible as we see what it looks like when a man lived out His life perfectly.

d. Jesus told His disciples in Matthew 28:18, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.”
   i. He is the one with all authority, He is preeminent, and He tells us to obey Him… but even more, through faith He has become the Lord and King of our lives.

V. **In Jesus, we are saved, forgiven**, and brought into His kingdom forever.

a. The Colossians were moving away from the truth in Jesus Christ as true God and true man… resisting the Word and authority of the Savior.
b. We also choose to go our own way time and time again, but the great King and Savior Jesus calls us back to His lordship over and over.
c. The power and glory that belongs to Jesus is beyond our imagination, but our reading gives us a glimpse – as it lifts Him to the highest place – and even says that in Him is the “fullness of God”.
   i. Yes, Jesus is God, and that makes it that much more amazing that He died on a cross to pay the price for our rebellion and rejection… for our neglect of His commands and word.
d. By grace through faith, we are in the domain of Jesus now, and nothing is better than Jesus and a relationship with Him.
e. Paul sets us straight today as he writes about the glory and power that Jesus holds in His hand… He’s not small…not just a friend… or just a giver of advice…or simply an encourager.
   i. Jesus Christ is the very fullness of God in human flesh… the One who stands before all creation… the One through whom all things were made… the One in whom all things hold together.
   ii. Jesus Christ our Lord and King is the One who is before time… the firstborn of the resurrection… and above every power and authority.
f. And this same Jesus is the One who stooped down to earth to rescue you.
   i. He takes rebels and makes them His own… He takes sinners and calls them forgiven… He takes those who resist Him and calls them back again and again by grace.
g. Just think… the One who holds galaxies in His hands stretched out those same hands to die on the cross for you.
   i. The One in whom all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell gave up His life… not because He wasn’t powerful, but because He loves you enough to wipe away the debt of sin and rebellion.
h. So, as we lead up to Thanksgiving, it is a great day to rejoice and give thanks.
   i. The King who comes in glory is the Savior who died and rose again for you.
   ii. The Ruler over all claims you… In Him the fullness of God dwells… and in Him, you are redeemed. Amen.