

**Read: Colossians 2:13-17**

## The Laws Were the Shadow, Jesus Is the Reality

### **Colossians 2:13-14,16-17**

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross... Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Do you like looking at your shadow? Shadows are fun, aren't they? You can use shadows to make animal shapes out of your hands. At just the right angle, you can look like a giant using your shadow!

Shadows are created by sunlight or other light shining on an object. If the sun is behind a person, that person's shadow will arrive at a place before they do. The shadow "announces" the arrival of the person before they get there.

In the same way, God once used special festivals, celebrations, and other laws as "shadows." They pointed people to deep needs they had of forgiveness, spiritual rescue, and rest. They announced the future arrival of someone who would really provide those very things. Once that someone, Jesus, arrived, these shadows would no longer be necessary.

But some people were holding onto these shadows too tightly. They were looking to these laws and traditions to give them what only Jesus could really give. That's why Paul urged the Colossians, "Do not let anyone judge you!" He wanted them to speak up about how Jesus is what we really need—not following laws and traditions that are only shadows.

So let's look at ourselves. Do we sometimes place too much importance on things like what day we go to church or what we wear to church? Can you tell the difference between what's a "shadow" and what is really about Jesus? Do we believe and live like we are free from shadows—thanks to Jesus who freed our hearts from sin?

Secondly, do we speak up to others who want laws and traditions to be what's most important rather than Jesus who is our only focus?

Thank God there's more than just shadows! We have Jesus and all he has really done. He's the reason you can honestly say you don't owe God anything. Jesus paid it all. He's the real deal!

Believe and live like it!

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for the Younger Children**

- Use your finger and make the sign of the cross in the air. Of what does that symbol remind you?
- Name two things you are thankful for that only Jesus could do for you?

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- What does it mean that Jesus *canceled* our debt? What was our debt?
- What's the most important thing God wants you know is true and real?

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- Name two traditions that are unique to your church. Discuss why you observe them. Are there any customs or traditions about church or faith that you might put too much of an emphasis on? Are there any "shadows" that trip you up?
- What's the best response if someone is judging you?

### **Closing Prayer:**

Dear Jesus, you did what laws, customs, and traditions could not. You paid the debt of sin I owed to God the Father. Help me speak up to others who are caught in the shadows and point them to you.

### **Hymn: CW 397:1,6 – Just as I Am, without One Plea**

Just as I am, without one plea But that thy blood was shed for me  
And that thou bid'st me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am; thy love unknown Has broken ev'ry barrier down.  
Now to be thine, yea, thine alone, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.