



The Sermon

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Colossians 2:9-15

"The Sufficiency and Sovereignty of Christ"

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TRANSCRIPT

So, please take your Bible and turn with me to the book of Colossians. We're going to be looking at verses 9-15, 9-15 of Colossians chapter 2, and I want to begin by reading the passage so you can be re-familiarized with this text. And there is so much theology that is packed into this text, you're going to love this.

Beginning in verse 9, "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him." What a stunning passage of scripture. May the Lord use this greatly in our own hearts. Let us go to Him in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, as we have read this passage, we desire to dig into it, and to understand it, and to see its relevance for us today. I pray that You would bless each and every person who is here, meet them at their point of need. I pray that You would build up those who are beaten down. I pray You would awaken those who are in slumber. I pray You would fire up those who are lukewarm. I pray that You would counsel those who are confused. Do all of this today, Father, through this passage of scripture, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. [End]

In these verses the apostle Paul sets forth some of the most awe-inspiring verses in the entire Bible on the person and work of Jesus Christ; I think you can already pick up on that. And here is presented the sufficiency, the supremacy, and the sovereignty of the Lord Jesus Christ; and never have such few words said so much about Christ. Here is the Christ of Christianity. This is not the Christ of liberal denominations. This is not the Christ of apostate churches. This is not the Christ of unbelieving theologians or unconverted pastors. This is not the Christ of false teachers and cult leaders. This is not the Christ of the Mormons or the Jehovah's Witnesses. This is the true Christ, the Christ of Christianity. And as Paul writes to the Colossians, he must address the false teachers who are coming into influencing them away from the true Christ; and in order to do that, he must set before them the reality of who Jesus Christ truly is.

These false teachers who were coming into the church and rubbing shoulders with the members and influencing some of their thinking, they were teaching that Jesus is a created being, that He is less than God, that He's one of a series of emanations that is descending down from God; and the angels are in this, and dreams and visions are in this, and Christ is one of these stairsteps leading down from God, that He's just another religious figure, He's just another moral teacher. In fact, He's not even truly human, He's a spirit being among us. And so Paul must define and defend the true Christ, in order to set this before the church in Colossae, and in order to set it before us today as well. There's a real sense in which our eternal destiny hinges upon the truth of these verses, because only the true Christ will save you. Faith in the false Christ will take you to hell.

And so, as we walk through this passage I have five headings that I want to set before you, and this is one of these passages that for me it just breaks out so easily. The first thing I want you to see is at the beginning of verse 9 and it is "the full deity of Christ, the full deity of Christ." Paul begins at the highest level possible, he goes straight to the mountain peak, he goes straight to the top of Mount Everest and he plants a flag for the full deity of Jesus Christ.

So he says in verse 9, "In Him all the fullness of Deity dwells." The "Him" is obviously the Lord Jesus Christ who is mentioned in the last word of the previous verse where Paul has said, "according to Christ." So it's obvious who the "Him" is, it's Christ. Christ has been the point of discussion really for this whole book. But even going back to verse 2 of chapter 2, "God's mystery is Christ Himself"; verse 3, "In Christ or hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"; verse 5, "Your faith in Christ"; verse 6, "You have received Christ Jesus the Lord."

There's no mystery about who the "Him" is. The "Him" is Jesus Christ, and Paul now makes this extraordinary statement, extraordinary statement: "all the fullness of Deity dwells in Him." This is really an expansion of chapter 1, verse 19, where Paul said, "For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him." Now in chapter 2, verse 9, he expands that to make it even more clear: "all the fullness of Deity." It would be hard to misunderstand that.

When he says, "all the fullness," that's really like saying, "all the all." I mean it's just a double reinforce, the fullness of Deity that belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ. "Deity" here refers to the divine nature. And what Paul is saying is that Jesus is more than merely godly. I mean, the elders of this church are godly. He is saying more than Jesus is God-like. I mean, you and I are made in the image of God, and so there is a likeness that we bear in us. He's saying more than Jesus possesses some of the attributes of God. This is a stunning statement in which he says, "He possesses all the divine essence of Deity," that all of the divine attributes that belong to God the Father and Spirit belong to God the Son, that this is deity that is undiluted, undiminished, and undivided.

Jesus possesses all of the holiness that God the Father possesses and God the Holy Spirit possesses. Jesus possesses all the righteousness, sovereignty, omnipotence, omniscience, wisdom, truth, grace, love, mercy, compassion, and wrath as do the other two Persons of the Trinity. All three Persons of the Trinity equally share the same essence and the same attributes.

The rest of the Bible clearly affirms the full Deity of Christ. In Matthew 1:23, "His name is Immanuel, which means God with us." In John 1:1, John writes, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." And in John 1:18 Jesus is identified as "the only begotten God." This little baby who was virgin-born, only begotten, is God: fullness of God. And at the end of John's gospel in John 20:28 in the upper room, the Sunday after the resurrection, Thomas is there, he sees the nail-pierced hands of Christ, and he says, "My Lord and my God!"

In Titus 2:13, Paul writes, "Our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." And in Hebrews 1:3, the writer of Hebrews makes this strong statement that "Jesus is the radiance of the Father's glory and the exact representation of His nature," - Did you hear that? - "the exact representation of His nature." In Hebrews 1:8 is a stunning verse. It says that God the Father says of the Son - this is how the Father addresses the Son: "Your throne, O God, is forever." God the Father identifies His Son as God, which really brings to my mind Psalm 110:1, "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Him.'" The Lord is God the Father, the Lord is God the Son. God the Father addresses His Son as Lord, which is a synonymous term for "Deity."

And so Paul begins at this extraordinarily high mountain peak by planting this flag of the full deity of Jesus Christ. And before I move on I really want to drive this home a little bit more with you, and I want to give you five anchor points to further underscore the deity of Christ, because you're going to have a knock at the door, and there are going to be two little guys on bicycles with black suits are going to come up, and you're going to open the door, and they're going to want to talk to you. You need to say, "Wait

just a second, I'll be right back." And I'm going to give you five silver bullets right now for the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, as if these verses that I just quoted were not enough.

Number one, "Jesus performed the works that only God can perform." That establishes His deity. Jesus created everything out of nothing; only God can do that. Jesus sustains the entire universe, He holds the entire universe in the palm of His hand; only God can do that. Jesus forgives sin, Jesus sends the Holy Spirit, Jesus judges all mankind; only God can do this.

Second, "He receives the worship that only God can receive." He is worshiped by the angels. He is worshiped by the church. He is worshiped by all mankind. Philippians 2:10-11 says, "Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Only God is to be worshiped; and here is Jesus the object of heaven's worship.

Third, "He possesses the attributes that only God possesses." I just walked through the list about 30 seconds ago, but just to remind you: He is perfectly holy, perfectly sovereign, perfectly omnipotent, perfectly omniscient. All the rest of these divine attributes, they belong in full measure to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And then, fourth, "He's called the names that only God is called." He is actually called God. He is called Lord. He is called King of kings and Lord of lords. That is said of the Father, and it is said of the Son.

And then, fifth and finally, "He possesses equality with God the Father and with God the Son." He's on the same level with Them. Matthew 28:19, "And you shall baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." All three persons possess full deity.

So this is where Paul begins. And this is important for us, because we still have false teachers today. And one example is Mormonism, and Mormon elders, and Mormon teachers; they're heretical, and they believe that Jesus is the firstborn spirit child of a heavenly father and a heavenly mother, that He is a created being, and that Jesus and Satan are spirit brothers, and that Jesus chose to follow the Father's path rather than the devil's plan of salvation, and that Jesus has inherited the divine attributes, but He is a separate God from the Father. They believe in three Gods: Father, Son, and Spirit. We believe in one God who exists in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And so we have to be absolutely assertive about the full deity of Jesus Christ. So that's where Paul begins.

Now, second, "the full humanity of Christ," and this is a brilliant presentation by the apostle Paul. Eternal Deity was joined to sinless humanity, making Jesus the God-man: truly God, truly man; fully God, fully man. So we continue in verse 9, that "all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form." I mean, this is a staggering statement. I know I keep using the words "staggering" and "stunning," but it is so profound.

The word "dwells" means inhabits, lives in. And it's in the present tense, you can see that in your English translation: "it dwells," not will dwell or once dwelled, but dwells, continually, permanently, eternally, perpetually, that Jesus through the incarnation 2,000 years ago now and forever dwells in bodily form. "That He dwells in bodily form" means He can only be in one place at one time. He is at the right hand of God the Father this very moment.

And we need to understand this, that as we are indwelled by Christ, it is in reality His Holy Spirit who possesses all of the attributes of God the Son and God the Father who indwells us. Jesus is in a resurrected, glorified body, seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high in heaven. And why this is important is there are some people who actually think that when you take Communion, i.e. the Mass, that Jesus' blood is in the Communion cup and Jesus' body is in the bread, that's heretical, absolutely heretical. And heresy is worse than being wrong; it means you'll be damned if you follow down this path.

No, Jesus - notice - His deity dwells permanently, eternally, in bodily form. While here on the earth He had a human body. He was born of a woman, Galatians 4; subject to growth, Luke 2; was seen and handled by men, 1 John 1. He hungered, Matthew 4; thirsted, John 19; grew tired, John 4; wept, John 11; walked, Matthew 14; slept, Matthew 8' died, John 19. And this is why Jesus had to assume a human body in order to die for us upon the cross. God cannot die. If He had remained only full Deity, He could have never paid the price for our sins. The wages of sin is what? Death. Only one in a bodily form could be crucified and die upon a cross.

This is why this is so critically important. Jesus had a human brain, Mark 13; He had human blood, John 19; a human soul, Matthew 26; a human spirit, Luke 23; a human will, Luke 22. He was as human as you are human, yet without a sin nature. And so this is fundamentally, critically important that we know who Jesus is, that we know Him in whom we have placed our faith and trust. He is fully God, fully man. And as 1 Timothy 3:16 says, "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh."

But Paul continues to build out this argument, and he says in verse 10, we see the full sufficiency of Christ. And we can understand this. Someone who is fully God and fully man would surely be fully sufficient in our lives. I mean, what more could you want?

And so we read in verse 10, "and in Him," and the word "and" is important, because it connects all this together. It's like links in a chain that are welded together.

"And in Him" - in Christ - "you" - believers - "have been made complete." That's an important statement. "Have been made complete" is one word in the original language, and it means to be filled to the full, such that there is no room for anything else; to be filled to the top so that nothing is lacking and nothing needs to be added. And what Paul is saying is that when you believed in Jesus Christ, you were made complete. You

were given everything that you needed to live the Christian life when you received Jesus Christ.

This is in the perfect tense, by the way, "have been made complete," which indicates past action with continuing results into the present and will continue into the future. At the moment of your conversion you were made complete in Christ, because you receive Christ. In Christ is everything. There was nothing that needs to be added along the way.

And this is also in the passive voice, and you can see that in the English translation. Look, "In Him you have been made complete." That means someone else made you complete. You didn't do anything to make yourself complete, you just showed up with an empty life, and Christ was added to your life, and that moment you were made complete in Christ. The fullness of Jesus is given to all believers, making us filled to the full.

Listen, you don't need the second blessing. The only second blessing there is is that you received every blessing the first time. You got it all when you got Christ. You do not need to speak in tongues. You do not need to be slain in the spirit. You do not need to be visited by angels. You do not need to have dreams or visions. You do not need to have personal, private little words from God. You do not need any of that stuff, because you have already been made complete in Christ. It's just a matter now of discovering all that God has put in you in His Son, and developing and growing in Christ.

Christ is everything; and you have Christ, so you have everything that you need. In every situation of life, whatever the challenge, whatever the obstacle, whatever the difficulty, you have it all in Christ. This is the full sufficiency of Christ. You have access to all joy, all power, all patience, all endurance, all steadfastness. You have access to everything that you need to live your Christian life. It's not out there someplace, it's inside of you.



And this leads now to the middle of verse 10, number four, "the full sovereignty of Christ." This just keeps getting better. "And He is the head over all rule and authority." Again, the word "and" is very important, which means you get the whole package. All that Christ is is what you receive; and He is the head. "Head" here represents – it's a metaphor for authority over all others. As the head, He is the Sovereign. If there is an organizational chart for the universe, He's at the head. Everyone and everything is subordinate and under Him. There's only one at the head and it is Jesus Christ.

And please note the verb tense here – I keep pointing this out – but it's in the present tense: "He is the head." We're not waiting for Him to become sovereign at the second coming. He is Sovereign right now, this very moment. He has all authority in heaven and earth, and He is overseeing all the affairs of providence. He's causing all things to work together for good.

He says, "He's the head over all rule and authority." "Rule," *arché*; "authority," *exousía*. Those are layers in hierarchy of spirit beings. We were first introduced to it in chapter 1, verse 16, "For by Him all things were created," – the "Him" refers to Christ – "both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible," – "visible" refers to human beings and the created order here on the earth, "invisible" refers to the world of angelic beings. Whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, those four words designate the hierarchy of the invisible spiritual world of angelic beings. They are highly organized, highly structured, tightly defined places and missions and purposes within the angelic world. And when he says, "over all rule and authority," that includes both elect angels as well as fallen angels, which are now demon spirits.

So why is Paul stressing this? Because the false teachers who have come into the church at Colossae have a bizarre preoccupation with angels, and they're trying to seduce the believers, as well as unbelievers, to worship angels, and to have a fixation on angels, and to talk yourself into having visions of angels visiting you. And if you'll let your eye just look down the page at verse 18 of chapter 2, you'll see why I'm saying this.

In verse 18 Paul says, "Let no one" – and that refers to the false teachers – "keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of angels, taking a stand on visions he has seen." Why would he say that? I mean, where did this come from? All of a sudden we're talking about the worship of angels; what's the relevance of this?

Well, it's highly relevant in this church, because these Gnostic teachers were pulling the believers' focus off of Christ onto the spectacular, onto the sensational, onto the mystical. And angels, that would seem for them to have been far more electrifying and exciting than Christ. And so that's why Paul says, "This is insane. You're taking your eye off the ball you; need to stay focused on Christ, who created all of the angels, who governs and rules over all the angels. Why on earth would you be worshiping angels, when the angels are worshiping Christ? They know better than you do."

I remember a number of years ago I was pastoring a church in Alabama. It's not the end of the world, but you can see it from there. And I had just been called to be the pastor of this church, and I was in my pastor's office, and it was about seven o'clock in the morning. There was a knock on my door, and I opened it, and there's one of the men who was on the pulpit committee that brought me there, probably the most influential man that brought me there; and he looked like he just seen a ghost. And I said, "Come in." And I said, "What's going on?" He said, "I've just encountered an angel." I said, "Really?" and he said, "Yeah. I was in my hammock outside swinging back and forth, having my prayer time." I think he got a little dizzy. And he said, "I could hear a rapping on the pane glass window," and he goes, "I just know it was the wings of an angel flapping against the glass." And at that moment I began to realize what all I've said yes to to come here.

That is something that exists in your little mind that has no basis in reality whatsoever, that you have convinced yourself of a non-existence. And that's was the danger here in the church at Colossae, and that's why Paul has to stress here in verse 10, "No, Christ is the head over all of these angels, and you're being caught up in all of this stuff. Get your eye back on Christ, His sovereignty over all. Keep your eye on Christ. Everyone and everything else is way under Him."

Now this leads to the last heading, which will occupy many verses. So, number five, verse 11, "the sole exclusivity of Christ," that's s-o-l-e, "the sole exclusivity of Christ." And Paul now begins to talk about the salvation that Christ, who is fully God, fully man, fully sufficient, fully sovereign, the salvation that He has now come to bring, and has brought to you.

So he says in verse 11, "and in Him." Please note the word "and." I mean, these are like boxcars all lined up together being pulled by Christ Himself. "And in Him" - in Christ who's the head - "you" - believers - "were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands." Now, we are New Testament Gentiles for the most part here, so the practice of Old Testament circumcision may not be quite as familiar to us. But it was required under the Mosaic law that on the eighth day a baby boy would be circumcised, he would have his male organ cut with a knife. And it was a sign of God's covenant. And the cutting signified that the nation Israel had been cut and set apart to God for His special purposes.

And it also signified what must take place in the future for each individual life, that after you've been physically circumcised - which will do nothing for your standing before God, it's just a rite or a ritual - you must be spiritually circumcised. You must have your heart circumcised. The word of God which is sharper than any two-edged sword must be wielded by the Holy Spirit and pierce your heart and cause a heart wound of conviction of sin and open up the your soul, and for your old heart of stone to be extracted and removed, and for God to implant a new heart inside of you. Circumcision pictured what must take place in your heart: a spiritual circumcision. And Moses spoke of that in Deuteronomy 30:6.

Well, these false teachers had come in, and they were still putting the people under the Mosaic law. The ceremonial law was fulfilled in the death of Christ. I mean, that's why we're not sacrificing a lamb in church here today. That's why I'm wearing a coat and tie and I'm not wearing some priestly garb, it was all fulfilled in Christ in His death at the cross. But these false teachers were trying to put them back under the law, and this is what they were saying: "In order to be saved, you men, adult men, have to

be circumcised." That's going to slow down evangelism, let me tell you that right now. That's going to slow things down. "Honey, I shrunk the church, you know. It's a Scottish revival."

And they were also saying that if you're already saved, if you're going to grow as a Christian, you've also got to be circumcised. And so Paul has to address this; that's why this is here. I mean, why are we talking about circumcision? Because that was a threat in this church. And so Paul has to say to them, "You don't need to be circumcised; you've already been circumcised, you've had the true circumcision. You don't need the external, physical circumcision; you've had the real circumcision, which is the circumcision of your heart. That took place when you were converted."

So look at this verse again: "and in Him you were also circumcised." It's already happened, it's your past. And let me just stop here and say if you are a born-again believer, you have already been circumcised. Your heart has been cut by the Word of God and the Spirit of God, and you have been regenerated and converted; that's your spiritual circumcision. And lest there be any misunderstanding, he adds these words: "made without hands." "No human hands have circumcised you, should circumcise you. The only circumcision that should occur are those made without hands; it would be by God Himself in your heart."

And so what happens when you are circumcised spiritually? Well, goes on to tell us here in verse 11: "in the removal of the body of the flesh." There's this intentional parallel illusion to physical circumcision, which would be cutting into your physical flesh and stripping away part of your body. In the spiritual circumcision, you have also had a cutting to take place that removes part of your flesh: you're sinful flesh, your sin nature. Do you see the double illusion that's going on here with these words? This is masterful teaching by the apostle Paul.

And so what he is saying is when you were spiritually circumcised in the new birth, there was the removal of the body of the flesh. The word "removal" means the stripping off or the stripping down. And our sinful

flesh, we still wrestle with, but it is no longer the dominant driving power in our lives as it once was. There was a time in our life when we did what we wanted, when we wanted, how we wanted, and our sinful flesh was in the front seat behind the steering wheel, driving us. And when we were spiritually circumcised, that sinful flesh was crushed and cut and put in the back seat; and now Christ is driving our lives. We still have a sinful flesh, but it is no longer the dominant force that it once was in our life. It's been put this way: it's present, but it's no longer president; it's in our life, but not over our life.

And so the sin nature in you has been stripped of its ruling power. Christ now is your ruling power; and the power of sin has been subdued, and has been conquered. It's like a chicken with its head cut off: it's still running around in us, but it no longer has the power that it once did. And so sinful impulses have been stripped, and they are no longer controlling and governing our thoughts, our affections, our desires. We now have Christ, who is dominant in our lives.

And he ends verse 11 by telling us who brought this about. He says, "by the circumcision of Christ." That means the circumcision performed by Christ, that Jesus is the one who subdued our flesh, and He did it by His Spirit, the Holy Spirit, who, in essence, stormed the walls of the castle of our heart and broke down the wall, and now indwells our life by the circumcision of Christ.

Romans 2:29 is a very key verse on this; I wish I had time to develop the last two verses of Romans 2, Paul's most theological epistle. But just to give you a brief part of verse 29, Paul says, "Circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit." Did you hear that? You see, Paul was writing to people who were circumcised, but uncircumcised. What does that mean? Well, it's what Jeremiah 4:4 says. And Jeremiah 9, the last two verses of that chapter talks about Jews who are circumcised, but uncircumcised. What does that mean? That means they have had a physical circumcision on the eighth day, but they've never had a spiritual circumcision of the heart as an adult.

And so the true circumcision is of the heart. That's why Paul says in Philippians 3:3, "We are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God." And so if you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you have had the true circumcision, and your heart has been cut deeply, and it brought conviction of sin, and it opened up, in essence, your chest cavity; and God took out your heart of stone and gave you a heart of flesh. It's a new heart that loves God, loves Christ, and loves the word of God. This is what Paul is belaboring here.

And it was Christ who did this in your life. He subdued you. This is why there is no such thing as a gay Christian. This is why there is no such thing as a homosexual Christian. Those two terms, they are oxymoron, they are antithetical to each other, they cannot coexist together, because if you are a true believer in Jesus Christ, your heart has been circumcised, and the ruling power of sin and all of that vile lust has been crushed by the Lord Jesus Christ, and you are now a new person in Christ, and the old things have passed away, and behold, new things have come.

There is no gay Christian on the planet. You're either gay, or you're a Christian, because of the work of Christ in regeneration and in the new birth; and this needs to be said loud and clear, because we're being bombarded by the world, bombarded by the world, especially this month, of all these lies and trash and vulgarity. No, when Christ saves a person and you become a Christian your heart has been filleted, your sinful flesh has been stripped and it is no longer running the show in your life. "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

So we come to verse 12. And not only have we been circumcised by Christ, we have been buried with Christ. Now what's the significance of this? Well, it's very important. When Paul states the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and He was buried, and He was raised according to the Scriptures."

Why mention the burial? Why don't you just mention the death and resurrection of Christ? Why do you throw in the burial? And why is the

burial thrown in here to begin verse 12? It's a good question. Well, it's important for the gospel concerning Christ's burial, because it demonstrated and proved that He really died, that He didn't just go unconscious, that He didn't just swoon into a state of slumber. But the fact that He was buried means that He really died upon that cross, and He's been buried; and now there has to be a resurrection from death.

So as this applies to us, here's why this is so important: it is because we have died with Christ, Romans 6, and we have been buried with Christ. The significance of this is we have really died to our old way of life. We're no longer living the old life we once lived. We died to that old way of life, and we have been buried with Christ; it's over. And we have now been resurrected and raised to live a whole new life. It is being buried with Christ is Paul's way of driving a stake that your old life is over, it's buried; that's not who you are anymore, and you now are a new creature in Christ Jesus.

We need to understand what all happens the moment we're saved. That's why we were made complete in Christ at that moment. And now he adds this, as we continue to look at verse 12, "being buried with Him in baptism." Now, this is not referring to water baptism, it's referring to a spiritual baptism, a spirit baptism. How do I know this? The whole context is not the physical, but the spiritual. It's not a physical circumcision, it's a spiritual circumcision. It's not a physical burial, it's a spiritual burial. It's not a physical baptism, it's a spiritual baptism. "We've been buried with Him in baptism," which means the Spirit of God has placed us into the body of Christ.

What are you doing over there, Don Moore? I went to college with Don Moore. Yeah. It's funny to hear your own voice coming back at you.

And in this Spirit baptism we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit moves into our life, and the Spirit places us into union with Christ and into communion with Christ. We are now in Christ by this Spirit baptism. And so whatever is true of Christ now becomes true of us. When He died, I died.

When He was buried, I was buried. When He was raised, I was raised, because I'm in Christ.

And then he goes on to say here in verse 12, "in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God." It was all the working of God to resurrect us to live a brand new life. You know what; that is really good news, because our lives before our conversion, our lives were sorry, and they were a train wreck, because we didn't have Christ. And all of that is behind us, and we have Christ in us.

So, verse 13, he really starts back at the beginning again. It's like he takes two steps backwards now to move forward again, and he goes, "When you were dead in your transgressions" – he's referring to, again, spiritual death. He's not talking about physical death, he's talking about spiritual death. "You were spiritually dead" – Ephesians 2:1 – "in your transgressions," – you were a spiritual corpse – "and the uncircumcision of your flesh." Obviously, it's referring to spiritually uncircumcised, and your sinful flesh was uncircumcised.

Now I want you to keep your eye on the pronouns here: "He made you alive together with Him." Who is the "He" and who is the "Him"? The "He" is God the Father, the "Him" is Jesus Christ. God the Father made you alive together with Christ, because the Spirit baptized you and placed you into Christ, and His resurrection has become your resurrection to live a new life.

And then he adds, "having forgiven us all our transgressions," all of them. And please not the verb tense; it's already happened. Every single transgression that you have, do, or will commit in your entire life have all already been forgiven, they've been taken off the books. Psalm 32:1, "How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven." Psalm 130:4, "There is forgiveness with You." Micah 7:18, "Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity?" Matthew 26:28, "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins." Acts 10:43, "Everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness sins," – "sins," plural. They've all been forgiven.



Now to double reinforce this, verse 14, he paints a picture for us: "having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us." Because of time, I'm just going to paraphrase this rather than break it down word for word. What this is saying is that God is keeping impeccable books on your life. He sees it all, and He knows it all, and He has recorded every sin you have ever committed - elementary school, middle school, high school, college, military, business. Everything you did and should not have done, everything you did not do and should have done, every motive, every word, God has kept perfect, impeccable records of your life. And out next to every sin, there is the corresponding punishment, and Hebrews says, "Every sin shall receive a just recompense," and God has it all written on what is referred to here as a certificate of debt. And the wages of your sin is eternal death, and these charges are all hostile against you.

But it says here that "He canceled out the certificate of debt." "Canceled out" means He wiped it out. And says, "He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross." So your whole record of sin was nailed to the cross; and when Jesus died and shed His blood, God the Father took the blood of Christ and He just wiped out your certificate of debt and ripped it down from the cross and buried it in the sea of His forgetfulness, and has placed it behind His back where He can see it no more. We have full, free forgiveness. There are no charges left against us, because at the cross Jesus paid the entirety of our certificate of debt. There's nothing to be extracted from you. "There is now therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." In Colossians 1:20, "Jesus made peace through the blood of His cross." Colossians 1:22, "He is now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death."

My friend, this is the good news of the gospel. Do you realize what a record of sin has been compiled against you? And do you realize what Jesus did at the cross, and what the Father did at the cross, to bring to you full forgiveness by canceling out your certificate of debt, having nailed it to the cross? And the blood of Christ has washed it away, and your record is now under the blood of Christ.

So, verse 15, and we wrap this up, "When He" - God the Father - "had disarmed the rulers and authorities," - that refers back to demon spirits and fallen angels - "He" - God the Father - "made a public display of them," - it was a spectacular public display when Jesus died at the cross - "having triumphed over them." And here is the imagery that Paul is drawing upon from this first century culture, that when a Roman general would take his troops and go invade another land, if he killed a certain number of soldiers, if he took a certain amount of spoils, if he captured a certain number of prisoners, and if he could bring back the defeated king, he would have a victory parade back into Rome. And the people would line the streets, and the conquering general would go first, and then behind him would be his officers and then his soldiers, and they're in chariots. But then comes the defeated army; and it's a public spectacle. It is to shame them publicly as having been conquered; and they are tied to the back of chariots, the defeated army. and they are drug through the streets of Rome all the way to Caesar's palace.

And that is the picture here that Paul is painting, that at the cross King Jesus went into the territory of darkness and He has defeated the enemies of hell. And at the cross - though we can't see it visually with our own eyes; nevertheless, it took place - God is dragging through the streets the defeated, fallen spirits, and there is victory in the Lord Jesus Christ. And that is why the last two words are "through Him," and the "Him" refers to Christ.

What an astonishing victory Jesus won at the cross. And the devil has been stripped, he's been shamed, and he's been subdued; and he's still alive and well, prowling about as a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But nevertheless, he's been brought under the dominion of the Lord Jesus Christ. And at the cross Jesus crushed the head of the serpent, Genesis 3:15. Hallelujah. What a Savior we have in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So as I conclude this, I just need to ask you: Have you considered the certificate of debt that God has been compiling on you: every sin, every transgression, every iniquity? Perfect record. Have you considered that?

You'll never escape that record, it's there. And have you considered what God did at the cross, as He put His own Son upon that Roman cross? And Jesus bore our sins in His body. He shed His blood. He suffered in our place. He bore our sins, and He provided the only atonement that there is for salvation. Have you considered that? And if you have never committed your life to Christ, you need to really take this to heart, because that record is going to be standing there waiting on you, if you do not believe in Jesus Christ.

But if you would believe in Jesus Christ now, today, this moment, God would cancel it out, and you would stand faultless before the throne of God, clothed in the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, having been washed in the blood of the Lamb. If this has never become real in your life, it could begin right now, this moment, in the quietness of your heart, as you would commit your life to Christ. Come to Christ. Take that decisive step of faith and come to Christ; and He will receive you, and He will pardon you, and He will forgive you. Let's close in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Our Father in heaven, how we thank You for Christ, who is everything to us. We thank You for Your plan of salvation and the way that You have so provided for us. Thank You that Christ is all that He is, and has become everything to us, in Jesus' name. Amen. [End]

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face to shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance on you and give you peace. God bless you.