

A Canceled Debt Colossians 2:11-15

Tease:

Have you ever considered what a death warrant means? It is when the Governor signs an official state document that reflects a court has adjudicated someone guilty of a capital crime and has sentenced that person to death. The death warrant then compels the prison warden to carry out the sentence and ensure the execution is carried out. As sinners, each one of us received a guilty adjudication from God and He signed death warrants for each us. But then God nailed those warrants to the cross of Jesus and Jesus paid the penalty, not us. We were set free. Join us this Sunday as Pastor Rich preaches through Colossians 2:11-15 where we see our death warrants nailed to the cross. Sunday School 9am and Worship 10am.

A Canceled Debt Colossians 2:11-15

We pick up our study in the middle of the paragraph that Pastor Matt preached from last week. There is just so much in this paragraph that we had to divide it into two messages.

Pastor Matt last week spoke about Jesus being our Incarnate guide, who can guide us through any circumstance and situation by simply trusting Him and not ourselves. You know that I am always harping about context and the role that it plays in our understanding the text. I am not going to go over all the text that

Pastor Matt spoke on last week but in order to set the stage for our text this morning I need to go back a couple of verses. Let's begin in verse 9.

Colossians 2:9–10 (ESV)

*9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells
bodily, 10 and you have been filled in him, who is
the head of all rule and authority.*

We saw back in Colossians 1:15 that Jesus is the image of the invisible God. Then in Col 1:19 we saw that in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell. Remember the overarching context here is the Preeminence of Jesus. Now here in Col 2:9-10 we see Paul again states that in Jesus all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form. The image of the invisible God, Jesus is completely, fully God in bodily form.

Remember Paul was dealing with the false teaching of the Gnostics who taught that Jesus could not be God since deity could not be in physical form. The historical Greek philosophy of physical bad and metaphysical or spiritual good. Jesus transcends the philosophical barrier between physical and spiritual bringing to us fullness completeness in life. Jesus is the head and ruler of the church which we have been immersed into as we will see in our text this morning.

So let's move on to our text for this morning.

Colossians 2:11 (ESV)

11 In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,

In Jesus, the fully God and fully man who has filled us, or completed us also circumcised us with a circumcision made without hands. To really understand what the Apostle Paul is saying here we have to know what the purpose of circumcision was.

We learned in Genesis 17:11 that Abraham was to be circumcised and that the circumcision was a sign of the covenant agreement between God and Abraham. This became an important sign for Judaism and as also part of what the Judaizers and possibly even the Gnostics were insisting on practicing in the church in Colosse. With that as the context Paul refutes the Gnostics and Judaizers by telling the Colossians that they had been circumcised by Jesus the head and ruler of the church with a circumcision made without hands, in other words not physical circumcision.

As Christians, followers of Jesus, we have been given a symbol or sign of the covenant or agreement between God and us. What is that sign or symbol? It is the putting off of the body of the flesh. Flesh is often used in Scripture to refer to sinful self. Jesus provides for us a way to be freed from the power of sin in our life. We have not been made perfect or sinless. God views us as

perfect because He views us through the filter of Jesus blood. But we all still sin and for that sin we receive forgiveness.

We just celebrated our three-fold communion service on Palm Sunday where we washed each other's feet in obedience to the commands Jesus gave symbolizing the daily cleansing we receive. We washed feet as well as ate a meal together which represents the end of our salvation journey when we are raptured and enjoy the marriage supper of the lamb. And we celebrated the bread and cup which commemorates the past part of salvation in remembering Jesus death on the cross.

So we recognize we are viewed as perfect but are not perfect. But through Jesus we have been given ability to be freed from sin. Remember that the payment Jesus made on the cross for your sins purchased you from the slave market of sin. You are no longer a slave to sin, you have been freed from that. This is the symbol of the covenant between God and us.

Paul explains it further in verse 12.

Colossians 2:12 (ESV)

12 having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.

The symbol of the agreement between God and us, which Paul called nonphysical circumcision he further explained that we

were buried with Jesus in baptism and raised in faith in the powerful working of God.

Here's how circumcision and baptism are related. Circumcision was the sign of the covenant between God and the Jews.

Christian water Baptism is the symbol of the covenant between God and the church. Neither symbol saved you or accomplished anything other than demonstrating your obedience. So just as the Jewish males were circumcised to symbolize their admittance to God's chosen people, Christian are baptized to symbolize our being freed by Jesus death on the Cross.

Colossians 2:13 (ESV)

13 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses,

We were all dead in our sin. We were enemies of God and stood outside of His family prior to our coming to faith in Jesus. To follow the symbolism of the previous verse we stood in an uncircumcised position before God.

But when we came to faith God made us alive together with Him. I want you to think about that phrase for a little bit. "God made alive, together with Him". The same power God used to raise Jesus from the dead in a physical sense He used to raise you from the dead in a spiritual sense. The grammar of the phrase also hints that not only was it the same power but it was

actually at the same time. As Jesus walked out of the tomb death and sin were conquered. Death held no hold over Him and no longer holds us. When Jesus died, and was raised from the dead the possibility of eternal life was made real.

A couple weeks ago we celebrated Easter. The culmination of the passion week in which Jesus died on Friday and was raised from the dead on Sunday victorious over death. The effect of His resurrection was that we came out of the grave with Him. How did God accomplish that?

Colossians 2:14 (ESV)

14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

He made eternal life possible by cancelling the record of debt we each had. This was a legally binding death sentence and debt. God is legally justified as judge, jury and executioner. But after passing sentence on us He cancelled the warrant and debt to society and Him by substitution of Jesus in our place. The judicial legal requirements were met but we walked free.

This is how it worked. When we sinned God as judge adjudicated us guilty and sentenced us to death, eternal separation from Him. The death warrant was issued but just as in our physical world the sentence is not carried out right away. The fact that it was not carried out right away does not diminish the validity of the warrant.

I hold in my hand here a copy of an actual death warrant signed by Gov rick Scott in 2014. This is a copy of the actual legal document that compels the warden of the Florida State Prison to cause the sentence of death to be carried out on the prisoner. We each had one of the documents in God's system of justice. But when Jesus went to the cross God took those death warrants and nailed them to the cross. (**Nail paper warrant to the cross**).

The effect of God the Father nailing those death warrants to the cross was it placed the warrants on Jesus and His death served as a substitution for yours. Payment made, justice served. So in effect we went into the grave with Jesus and came out of the grave with Him. Raised to eternal life.

Colossians 2:15 (ESV)

15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

In raising us from spiritual death through the actual death of Jesus on the cross God disarmed the rulers and authorities triumphing over them. In order to understand who Paul was referring to we need to go back to chapter 1 verse 16.

Colossians 1:16 (ESV)

16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones

*or dominions or **rulers or authorities**—all things were created through him and for him.*

This is one of my favorite verses. In it we see that Jesus created all things in the physical world and the spiritual world. Paul then further defines the spiritual world by referring to thrones or dominions and rulers and authorities. The created spiritual world is a hierarchy. With Satan or Lucifer, the greatest created being as chief angel before his fall. He took one third of an unknown number of other angels with him. Now organized into ranks of both fallen angels and unfallen angels. So back to chapter 2.

Colossians 2:15 (ESV)

15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Based upon what we saw in 1:16 rulers and authorities here is a reference to the demon world of fallen angels, at all ranks and levels. Since the fall of Satan his goal has been to divert attention away from God. To discredit the word of God. Remember that is what Satan said to Eve in the garden. “Is that really what God said”, casting doubt on what God said. He is still doing that today in many ways. Even in the church as many walk away from the authority of the Word of God.

But remember what we saw in verse 11. Jesus put off the body of the flesh, our sinful self through our salvation. We have been

given the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to guide and empower us to walk according the word and direction of God.

When God nailed the death warrants to the cross the evil spiritual world was put to shame. Their entire collective of evil had failed and God had won. They were put to shame.

God alone is victorious over death and sin. God alone nailed the death warrants to the cross. God alone can conquer Satan and his minions. The cross of Jesus and His empty grave stand as symbols to the evil spiritual world that God has won. There is nothing they can do to change that.

So as we reflect on this passage this morning I would like for you to consider what Paul is reminding us of here and why these words are so important. God has given us a symbol of what He has already accomplished but we have yet to experience, eternal life. We have been spiritually circumcised and had the body of flesh removed. We have been freed from slavery to sin. We symbolize that through Christian water Baptism in which we immerse three times in the water depicting the work of the Father in salvation who created the plan, the Son who died to pay the price, and the Holy Spirit who draws us to accept the plan and gift. We encourage new believers to submit to baptism to symbolize that they too have been saved by God power and have a relationship with God. In saving us God nailed our death warrant to the cross freeing us for eternal life.

Let's Pray!