



SCRIPTURE:

Colossians 2:9-15

RECAP:

The Latin phrase "Christus Victor" means Christ is the Victor. That is the name of my message this morning. Our text takes us to the heart of Jesus' victory over Satan, sin, and death. There truly is a cosmic battle that wages around us, but the victory is sealed. We're only counting down the days until the war's end.

In the Civil War, the victory of Grant in Vicksburg, Mississippi, followed by Sherman's victory in Atlanta and famed march to the sea, essentially spelled the end of the Civil War. The war's outcome was already in hand, yet fighting would continue to rage for months to come. There were still real battles, with real bullets, and real casualties that unfolded, but the victory of the war was in hand.

In World War II, after the Americans successfully invaded France and the Russians won the battle of Stalingrad, both the Russian forces and American forces fought their way to Germany, defeating the Nazis in battle after battle. The war's outcome was at hand even years before it actually ended.

This is the situation we live in today. The victory has been won. Christ has defeated Satan, sin, and death, but the final conclusion of the war is still to come. The end is near, the victory is certain, but until that day we still battle in the final days of the war.

Paul helps us to see that in our passage today.

Exegesis of Colossians 2:9-15:

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.

Previously, in verse 8, Paul said they shouldn't be taken by philosophies and human traditions according to men, and not according to Christ. Why should we root our thinking, lives, and actions on Christ above all others. He says it: because in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily. What does it mean to say the fullness of deity dwells bodily? It means that Jesus is fully God. The Eternal Son of God, and Second Person of the Trinity, came into the world as a man. Christ is Lord. Jesus is God. This is why our lives are to be founded and rooted in everything that accords with him. Nothing outside of him will last. It's building your life on the sand, and will blow away.

We are to be satisfied in Christ because all the fullness dwells in him. As Christians, filled with the Holy Spirit, we are filled with the Spirit of Christ who is with us always. Jesus is the head of all rule and authority. This is a return to Paul's earlier remark of Christ's supremacy over all things. Jesus is the head. He has the power and authority. We'll see in a moment what he does with this power and authority.

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, 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.

Again, Paul says, "In him." This phrase is a favorite of Paul's in all his writings. These wordings are his favorite words to describe Christians. We are those who are "in him" or "In Christ." What does it mean to be "in" him? We are found in his death, in his resurrection, in his righteousness. We are hidden in him. He is our head and representative.

In him we were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands. He is referring to how in the old covenant, circumcision was a sign of the covenant and the physical act by which the people of God were identified. But now in Christ, we are circumcised in the heart. It is no longer an act or work of the flesh. Our circumcision is of the heart and it comes by faith. The people of God are marked by changed hearts, which resound with the love of Christ.

In Christ, we have been buried with him in baptism and also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God. So check this out...we were crucified and buried with Christ and raised with him through faith. This means that by faith in Jesus, we died with Christ, were buried with Christ, and raised with Christ. Our status are those with whom sin has been put to death and conquered. Now, we know that there is still a battle that wages that we must fight, but this demonstrates the status and position we have in Christ. We are in him. This means all of his finished work is applied to those who receive it by faith. By the way, this is also what we are demonstrating in baptism when we go under the water (buried with Christ in our sins) and come out of the water (raised in the power of Christ to new life). This is all received by faith.

And this is all a result of the fact that Christ is raised from the dead. None of this would be ours if he were still in the tomb.

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, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

These verses are some of my favorites in the entire Bible. I encourage you to take up the challenge of memorizing these verses. After these incredible passages about being buried with Christ in baptism and raised with him. He captures what a miracle of grace this is to us.

We were dead in our trespasses and uncircumcision of our flesh. We didn't have spiritual life in us. We were at enmity with God, meaning we were outsiders because of sin. Dead people can't be expected to do too many things in my experience. This spiritual deadness was from our trespasses against God. It was the result of our uncircumcised hearts.

Charles Spurgeon -- **“Miracles of grace must be the seals of our ministry; who can bestow them but the Spirit of God? Convert a soul without the Spirit of God! Why, you cannot even make a fly, much less create a new heart and a right spirit.”**

He goes on to say, **“Unless the Holy Ghost blesses the Word, we who preach the gospel are of all men most miserable, for we have attempted a task that is impossible. We have entered on a sphere where nothing but the supernatural will ever avail. If the**

Holy Spirit does not renew the hearts of our hearers, we cannot do it. If the Holy Ghost does not regenerate them, we cannot. If He does not send the truth home into their souls, we might as well speak into the ear of a corpse.”

Why must the Spirit of God act in supernatural power? Because we were dead. But notice the "were" in Paul's sentence. It's "were" because they are now believers. They are now Christians and he is giving them a glimpse behind the curtain of their salvation to see what a miracle it is provided by Christ alone.

What happened? God made them alive. He replaced dead hearts with new hearts. This is regeneration. This is what Jesus is describing to Nicodemus when he says "you must be born again of the Spirit." This work of God is necessary for any salvation. God made them alive with Christ, forgiving them of all their trespasses. All sins forgiven. Washed away. Removed as far as east is from west. Buried.

How did God do this? By canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. **What debt?** Our sin debt. Our violations against God's law have incurred a debt. **What legal demands?** Our debt condemns us to Hell. Satan has rights to us as rebels. Think about it: in sin, we are acting as children of the devil. We belong to him. There are legal demands for this but Christ canceled the legal demands.

How? He set them aside (removed them from us) by nailing it to the cross. The record of debt with its legal demands were nailed to the cross as the nails drove through the flesh of the Lamb of God who was paying the debt. Jesus removes the wrath of God from us by removing our record of debt from us. He took on the record of debt, and took upon himself the wrath of God and died at the cross. This is why he is the Savior of sinners. He alone can take this sin as the spotless one without blemish.

What was the result of this? He disarmed the rulers and authorities. This is Satan and his demons. These are the spiritual forces of darkness in the world. Jesus' death, and resurrection, disarmed the spiritual forces of darkness that had legal demands over us. To disarm them means to render them impotent. They have no power over us. They have no claim on us. They have no right to us. This is what Jesus accomplished. This disarming put them to open shame, in the courts of heaven and earth. The cross of Christ triumphed over them in devastating fashion. The cross, which at first was considered a victory for the powers of darkness, was a crushing defeat. He made a spectacle of them. In the ancient world, the word translated "triumphing" was used to describe victory

parades of victorious armies. The emphasis here is how the cross, and defeat of Satan, served to the glorification of Christ. **How?** In his defeat of them, and in his saving of us.

Application from this passages:

1. Jesus is God in the flesh and the head of all rulers and authorities.

Paul's emphasis on this point is not redundant because he struggles with other things to say. It's redundant because we struggle to grasp how life-changing this reality is. The supremacy of Christ over all things should change your life.

- It should help you with anxiety or depression.
- It should help you in your battle to fight sin.
- It should comfort you in your grief, sorrow, or pain.

How does it help in all these situations? Because we're reminded that the world is not spinning out of control. There is no uncontrolled chaos. Our lives are not left to chance. We are not creatures left to fate or the roll of the dice. Jesus rules and reigns. The one who is God in the flesh, defeated Satan, sin, and death, and ascended to Heaven rules and reigns from the throne. Right now he reigns. Right now he governs. Letting that seep from our minds to our hearts helps remedy 10,000 problems in our lives.

2. Faith is a gift of grace provided by the Holy Spirit.

It is faith in Christ that saves us. But even that faith is a gift. If faith was something we generated through our own intellect, comprehension, ability, or upbringing, then faith would be a work. Faith would be something natural we bring that activates something supernatural to happen, namely, salvation. But even the faith that comes from us is a gift from God.

This is why we pray, "Oh God, give me faith, to get through this circumstance." Or "Oh God, give my brother/friend/spouse/father faith to believe your Word and trust Christ." We pray that way because we know that faith isn't something that can be conjured up by someone, at least not the saving kind. True faith is given by God as a gift. The Holy Spirit gives us faith to see Christ as lovely, call upon him for salvation, and to live out our lives walking in Christ.

Are you in Christ today? Give thanks to God for the faith he has given you.

Do you know people still not in Christ? Cry out for God to give them faith.

Do you struggle under the weight of sin or some struggle? Ask God to give you faith to sustain you in the trial.

3. Every person is truly under the legal demands of Satan for their sins.

When I say "every person" I mean those who have not put faith in Jesus. Every person is born into sin, into Adam and the curse of sin, and every person racks up their own personal debt of sin. The result of this is that mankind truly walks under a death sentence and awaits condemnation.

I know this is not popular to say in our culture. We conceive of a "god" in our culture that never punishes the wicked. That believes the best in people. That "sees our heart." And we concoct these notions that nobody really ever goes to Hell for sins. I don't want to be insensitive here, and I'm not trying to be provocative, but if you go to funeral homes or funerals across the country today you'd be left to conclude that every person being buried was a wonderful person in a better place right now. That is not what the Bible says.

*Jesus said, 13 "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. 14 For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few." - **Matthew 7:13-14***

Few find the road that leads to life. Many are on the road that leads to destruction. Why? How? Because they are under the legal demands that their trespasses have incurred. Listen to what **Jonathan Edwards** says about this:

"Unconverted men walk over the pit of hell on a rotten bridge, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that they won't bear their weight, and these places are not seen...Almost every natural man that hears of hell, flatters himself that he shall escape it; he depends upon himself for his own security; he flatters himself in what he has done, in what he is now doing, or what he intends to do; everyone lays out matters in his own mind how he shall avoid damnation, and flatters himself that he contrives well for himself, and that his schemes won't fail... O sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in: it is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you, as against many of the damned in hell.

You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it, and burn it asunder; and you have no interest in any Mediator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of

wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one moment..."

Every person is in need of Christ. Nobody is innocent. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

4. Christ alone can rescue sinners from Satan, sin, and eternal death.

It is Jesus who disarmed the rulers and authorities by his death on the cross. Our condemnation was set aside because he was condemned for us. If you put your trust in Jesus, and receive his death and resurrection as the payment for your sins, then you can be forgiven. When Jesus said "it is finished" at the cross, he spoke the word **"tetelestai."** It means: **paid in full.** At the cross, Jesus paid the penalty for our sins in full so that no payment remains for us.

Romans 8:1 -- *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

Are you "in" Christ Jesus today? Call upon his name. Trust in his finished work. If you are in Christ, then you have been buried and raised with him. The Lamb of God was slain on your behalf. There's no condemnation left for you. It is finished. The debt is paid in full.

QUESTIONS:

- 1) What does Paul mean in verse 9 when he says, "For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily"? (John 1:1-3, 14; John 10:30, John 8:58, Isaiah 9:6, Titus 2:13, Hebrews 1:8)
- 2) What does it mean that through faith we are "in him" or "in Christ"? (Ephesians 1:4, 6, 7, 13; Philippians 3:9, Romans 8:1, Galatians 2:20)
- 3) What is faith? (Read Hebrews chapter 11 and discuss some of the examples of faith that are listed)
- 4) Why is the regeneration of our hearts by God necessary to obtain faith? (Romans 5:12, 6:23; Genesis 3:21; Revelation 2:18, Matthew 10:28; Ezekiel 36:26; John 3:5, Ephesians 2:8)
- 5) What was our debt (James 4:17; 1 John 3:4; James 2:10)? What legal demands stand against us because of that debt (Romans 6:23, 2:5; Colossians 3:6; Psalm 7:11; Matthew 25:46; Revelation 20:15)? How did God cancel the debt against us (Romans 5:1; Galatians 3:24; Romans 5:9? What is the result of that cancellation (Romans 8:1-4; John 8:36)?
- 6) What does it mean that Jesus is the head of all rule and authority (Hebrews 1:3; Revelation 12:10; Colossians 1:16; Matthew 28:18)? Why did he have to be raised

from the dead in order to disarm them (Eph. 1:20–22; 1 John 3:8b)? How does that give us hope (Romans 6:4, 8:11; Colossians 2:12; Romans 8:17; 2 Timothy 2:12; Colossians 1:1-3)?

- 7) What are some ways that you try to get out of the legal demands on your own?