

Forgiven

Col. 2:13-15

Our main passage this morning is from Colossians 2:13-15, but, in order to provide background to those verses, I am going to start reading in verse 11.

All Stand and Read Scripture

Colossians 2:11-15 (NASB)

¹¹ 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; ¹² 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. ¹³ 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, ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

Prayer

INTRODUCTION:

In the middle of the second chapter of Colossians, Paul is pleading with the Colossians and by extension, he is also pleading with us to remain anchored to Jesus Christ as we walk in Christ. He has told us to not let anyone hold us captive "**thorough philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men and the elementary principles of the world.**" It is only through Christ Jesus that "**you have been made complete**".

Then in verses 11-15, he gives us a glimpse into what it means to be in Christ.

In this passage it tells us that when we were saved, our old self that was "in sin" died and was buried and we were resurrected into a "new life" with Christ. Verses 11 and 12 say it this way, ¹¹ 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; ¹² 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.

The "body of flesh" that Paul is referring to is our old self that was in sin. The "old man" was cut away. It was removed from us by Christ and we inherited a new identity that wanted to please God.

Starting in verse 13 and going through verse 15, Paul tells us something more. He says we are filled in Christ because we have been forgiven of our sins through Christ's work on the cross.

It is that forgiveness that we want to look at this morning. As we consider the forgiveness that has been provided to us through Christ Jesus, will you consider with me...

BODY:

I. The Need for God's Forgiveness.

We cannot appreciate or understand the forgiveness we have been promised unless we first understand how desperately we need that **forgiveness**. Paul gives us a hint of how badly we need this forgiveness in verse 14.

¹⁴ **having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us;**

He points to two things that emphasize our need for God's forgiveness. The first is that there is a record of debt. He says by cancelling the "**certificate of debt**". This word translates to a word that we would refer to today as an IOU. It essentially says that "**I owe this debt and I am responsible to pay it back**".

ILLUSTRATION:

We could compare today to signing loan papers. If you want a loan for \$5000 and you have good credit, they will give you the money. But they are going to ask you to sign several pieces of paper that establish the fact that you owe this money and you are responsible to pay it back with interest.

The word was also used in a criminal or legal context. It referred to something similar to an indictment. The **indictment** came after the conviction. It was a record of the crimes that they were convicted of and the sentence that went with it.

Paul uses this word and says WE have a record of this debt too. There is a record of our debt before God. Turn with me to Revelation chapter 20. If not for the saving grace of Jesus, this chapter would be one of the most terrifying verses in the scripture.

In Revelation, John is recording his vision of the final judgment. A vision of the day when mankind will stand before God and be judged.

Revelation 20:12-13 (NASB)

¹² **And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. ¹³ **And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one *of them* according to their deeds.****

John sees this final judgment and he sees all people brought before God to be judged. And then he sees books. He says from these books, the people are being judged.

What was contained in these books? The books were filled with the deeds that they had done. It is record of all that they had done. It is a record of all of YOUR **actions** and all of YOUR **thoughts** and all of YOUR **desires**.

God has keep perfect, accurate, and comprehensive records of every person's life. The scriptures tell us that the dead will be judged by what is written in the books according to their deeds.

THINK OF THIS FOR A MOMENT! All of the things that you think are way in the past and are gone are written down. All of the things that you think you have gotten away with, all of the things that you think nobody knows about, it is written down. There is a record of it. One day this book will be opened and it will be read before you and you will be judged based upon it.

Luke 12:2-3 (NASB)

² But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. ³ Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed upon the housetops.

Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed or hidden that will not be known. All those things we think are secret will be revealed. Even those things that are hidden in our heart will be exposed. **God will know and disclose the motives of our heart when we did them.**

This record is a problem for us because it is a record of our debt. It is a record of our guilt. All of us have a record of breaking and violating God's law and God's standard over and over and over again.

All you have to do is look at the ten commandments which were written so we could understand that we are sinners.

The first commandment is "**You shall have no other Gods before Me**".

Most of us in America think we are OK on this one. We only serve One God. There are no idols in my closet! I do not have any Buddhas. I don't have any wooden statues. I only have one God that I bow down to. I am good!

Until you realize that an idol is simply anything that we love, trust, worship, or treasure in the place of God.

Colossians 3:5 (NASB)

⁵ Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.

Look at the things that Paul refers to as idolatry!

- When we practice immorality, impurity, and passion, we are worshipping our sexual pleasures in place of God.

- Our evil desires cause us to put our worldly desires in place of God.
- Greed causes us to desire what we think is valuable (such as money or possessions) in the place of God.

What do we learn from this? WE ARE GUILTY! As we read through the law, we see how many ways we have failed to do it. There is a record of all of our guilt and all of our debt. Just the fact that there is a record of our debt is bad enough, but we also learn that our debt has consequences.

Verse 14 says ¹⁴ having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us;

At judgment there will be demands upon our debt. There will be a debt that MUST be paid for violating the law of God.

Ignorance will not be an excuse.

Romans 1:19-21 (NASB)

¹⁹ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. ²¹ For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Do you see your need for forgiveness? We have all sinned. But, Paul doesn't just tell us of our need for forgiveness, he reveals to us the means by which we can receive that forgiveness.

II. The Means of God's Forgiveness.

Colossians 2:14 (NASB)

¹⁴ 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.

The means by which God grants forgiveness to people who have a mountain of debt is through Jesus Christ who died for our sins on the cross.

1 Peter 2:24 (NASB)

²⁴ and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

The book that records the debt for you, if you are a Christian, was taken and it was placed upon Jesus Christ on the cross. But it was more than that, as Christ bore our sins, God poured out the legal demands that had been charged to us. He poured out the curse that belonged to us for violating the law.

Jesus died on the cross in order to take His Father's wrath against **MY** sin. Paul continues and says that when Christ died for our sins, God cancelled our debt. He wiped it out. He

took all the **evil things that we have done** and **all of the wicked thoughts that we have made** and been wiped them **ALL** away. The debt was paid in full by Christ.

God not only wiped the pages clean, verse 14 says he also carried it away. It is gone, it cannot be found.

Psalm 103:12 (NASB)

¹² As far as the east is from the west,
So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

The record of my debt is now just white pages and God carries it away as far as the East is from the West.

Somewhere in heaven there is a filing cabinet that is supposed to have a book with my record of debt. But because I have accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior and because my sins were nailed to the cross on Calvary, there is no book. All that remains is a note saying "This account has been settled by Jesus Christ."

When we face God on judgment day, there will be no record of debt, just the Book of Life with our name written in it. **This is the means by which God has forgiven us.**

In light of this, I would like for us to think about...

III. The Nature of This Forgiveness.

A. This forgiveness is free.

Romans 3:23-24 (NASB)

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

It is a GIFT from God by His grace. It is offered to those who will receive it by faith.

B. God's forgiveness is full. It is for all of your sin.

Colossians 2:13 (NASB)

¹³ 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**,

It does not matter what your sins are. There is not too much sin for God to forgive. God knew it would be a common thing to think. So He found the Apostle Paul.

1 Timothy 1:13-15 (NASB)

¹³ even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; ¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are *found* in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost *of all*.

Despite the fact that Paul was persecuting Christians, God's grace was sufficient to wash him white as snow.

C. God's forgiveness is final.

Jesus paid for my sin 2000 years before I was born. He paid for ALL of my sins once and for all.

D. God's Forgiveness is Forceful.

Someone might think, "If God's forgiveness is free, full, and final why not enjoy the pleasures of sin because it is already forgiven". If you long for the pleasures of sin, you have not truly repented. Forgiveness is the greatest motivator for Godly living that you will ever know. **The thought of being forgiven for a debt that you could not possibly pay which will provide an eternal life with God in heaven WILL motivate us.**

Especially when we realize the price that Jesus paid. Now that we have received it. We will have the **desire** to honor, and love, and serve the One Who provided it for us. We cannot understand what forgiveness is and **NOT WANT** to honor Him for what He has done.

The greatest motivator for Godly living is not the fear of being unforgiven, it is gratitude for BEING FORGIVEN!

There is a force in KNOWING that we have been FORGIVEN, KNOWING that we have been redeemed by a great gracious Savior.

CONCLUSION:

My prayer for you this morning is if you have come to faith in Jesus Christ that you would LIVE in His forgiveness. That you would push aside all fear of condemnation of doubt and your heart would overflow with grace and gratitude for the One Who has saved you and you would live motivated by desire to honor God who has provided this grace!

Many Christians who have been forgiven still live as if they have been condemned. Rest assured the guilt has been dealt with once and for all. Let us live in this forgiveness.

My prayer is also for those who have not been forgiven, that you might realize that there is a record of your life and you need this forgiveness so Christ can wipe your record clean as well and make you righteous before God. It is freely offered to you if you repent, believe, and be obedient in baptism.

If you have not accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, do it today. Don't wait until you have cleaned up your life. **You don't clean yourself up to come to the Christ; you surrender yourself to Christ, to let Him clean you up!**

So we offer His invitation, realizing that there may be someone here who has never ever accepted Christ as their Savior. We plead with you. We appeal to you not to let this moment escape nor to let this window of opportunity pass you by.

If you do not know Christ as your personal Savior, then come now, confess that you believe in Him, be faithful to Him in Christian baptism, arise to walk in the newness of life. God's invitation is offered to you. Will you come as we stand and as we sing?

He Is Lord!

He is Lord, He is Lord. He has risen from the dead and He is Lord.
Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess, That Jesus Christ is Lord.