

Complete In Christ – Part 2

Colossians 2:11-15

Pastor John Miller

I want to back up, as I like to do a lot of times, to get a running start because the section we covered last week, verses 8-10, kind of springboard us into the section we're going to cover tonight. It's really all one section, so back up to verse 8. Remember, our text is verses 11-15. Back up to verse 8 where Paul started with a warning, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." He was warning the believers in Colossae not to let the false teachers distract them from their reliance upon, their focus upon, Jesus Christ—that Christ was sufficient for all their needs, that Christ was everything we need, that He was to have preeminence.

Notice verse 9, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." In verse 8, Paul warned them; in verse 9, he gives them the safeguard, which is Christ, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,"—Christ's true deity and His true humanity, God dwelling bodily in Christ. Then, in verse 10, His complete sufficiency, "And ye are,"—this is the key verse—"complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power."

Paul has made it clear that all Christians are complete because of their position in Christ, verse 10. He makes it very clear that you are complete in Him. I talked about that phrase that Paul loves to use, "in Christ," "in Christ Jesus," and that every believer, the moment you are saved, you are taken out of Adam the first, with his sin, death, and condemnation, and you are transferred to Christ. You're placed in Christ, and His righteousness is then imputed to you. Again, just an important note, everything we learn about tonight is basically true of all Christians.

I'm getting a little bit ahead of myself, I haven't gotten to my text, verse 11, but everything we're going to learn from verses 11-15 is true of every Christian. Listen to me very carefully, in spite of how mature you are, in spite of how long you've been a Christian, and in spite of how well you serve or live the Christian life, what we're going to learn tonight is true of every Christian. It's so important and essential for you to grasp this because you cannot live the Christian life not knowing what these blessings are that you have in Christ. Until you know who you are in Christ, you can't live by faith that Christian life that God has planned or intended for you.

Verse 10, "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power." The focus of our text from verses 11-15 is our position in Christ and our identification with Christ. All that's true of Christ is identified with me or imputed, the theologians use the term, to us, Christ's righteousness and all the blessings I have. Once I was in Adam—sin, death, and condemnation, separation from God—now I'm in Christ. Remember Romans 8:1 is a great cross-reference, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Just a little footnote, that verse stops right there, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," period. We have been taken out of Adam, placed in Christ.

Now, let's read verses 11-15. "In whom,"—that is, Christ—"also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 12 Buried with him,"—if you want to mark your Bible, mark verse 11, "In whom," a reference to Christ; and verse 12, "with him"—" . . . in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened,"—and here's the phrase again—"together with him." So, you have, verse 11, "In whom," referring to Christ; verse 12, "with him," referring to Christ; and at the end of verse 13, "together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses,"—or your sins. We'll come back to that. Verse 14, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross,"—Paul brings us back to the cross—"And having spoiled,"—means to divest—"principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it."

Paul uses the phrase, verse 11, "in whom;" verse 12, "with him;" and verse 13, "together with him." Knowing, believing, and acting upon your position in Christ, with Christ, together with Christ, and your identification with Christ—His death, His burial, His resurrection—is the basis for victorious Christian living. What we're going to cover tonight is the very bedrock foundation of living the victorious Christian life, and I believe that if Satan can keep Christians ignorant of these truths of their position in Christ, he can also keep you defeated.

In our text, verses 11-15, Paul explains three blessings about our identification with Christ. They're a three-fold blessing of our identification with Christ. The points are going to appear on the screen, but I want you to see them in the text. First, in Christ we as believers are dead and buried. If you're taking notes, write that down. I, as a believer, am dead and I am buried. You say, "Wow! That's awesome. I'm so glad I came tonight. I'm dead and buried. God bless you. Have a wonderful week." Don't worry, we won't keep you in the grave, okay? Christ also rose from the dead. Amen? And, we're risen with Christ, and Christ ascended back to heaven and He's exalted at the right hand of the Father, and we are with Christ in heavenly places. The first point is we are dead and buried.

Go back with me to verse 11 and the first line in verse 12. "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 12 Buried with him in baptism." Notice in verse 11, as I already pointed out, "In whom also ye are," so this is the fact about you as a believer. Again, in Ephesians 1:3, in Christ we are, " . . . blessed . . . with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places." One of the problems is a lot of Christians don't realize that when I got saved, it wasn't just that I accepted Jesus as my Savior, nor was it just that my sins were forgiven, it was that I was placed in Christ—I was made a child of God, I was born again, I was indwelt by the Holy Spirit—I was also adopted into His family, and on and on and on the list of blessings go that happened immediately when I accepted Christ. Before I began to do anything, these things were true of me as a believer.

So, in Christ we are, notice verse 11, circumcised. You say, "Well, now I'm really glad I came

tonight. I'm dead, I'm buried, and I'm circumcised. How wonderful that is." Now, this is not talking about the physical rite of circumcision. This is talking about the implication or application of that of the cutting away of the fleshly desires of our hearts or our sinful nature.

Circumcision was a covenant God made with Abraham back in Genesis 17, if you want to make a note of that and you can go check it out. It was a sign of the covenant God made with Israel. Sadly, it became their focus and separated Jew and Gentile. Even in the Scriptures you have the Gentiles referred to as the uncircumcised and the Jews as the circumcised. It became a thing where the Jews thought because of this rite that I'm going to be accepted by God, that this outward rite would bring acceptance before God. You're not saved by any good works, by any righteous deeds, by any rites or any rituals.

He also mentions baptism, and that's a rite or a ritual. In Judaism they had circumcision, in Christianity we have baptism, and they're kind of related, but the danger is that like the Jews who put their faith in their rite or ritual, people today can put their faith in a rite or a ritual. You ask them, "Are you a Christian?" "Yes, I've been baptized." They're not one and the same thing. You can be baptized and not be a Christian; you can be a Christian and not be baptized. They're not one and the same. If you are a Christian, you should be baptized, but baptism doesn't save you. It's a rite or a ritual that is an outward showing of an inward work just as circumcision could not save you.

Now, in the early church where the early believers were Jewish, when the Gentiles started getting saved, this became an issue and many of the Gentiles were told, "You can't be saved, you can't be a Christian, you can't go to heaven unless you're circumcised." Paul stood up to that and said, "No, we're saved by grace through faith. It's not of works, lest any man should boast," and they contended over this issue and determined that it wasn't necessary or essential for salvation.

In Philippians 3:3, Paul talks about, "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit . . . and have no confidence in the flesh," so the true circumcision or people of God are those who do not trust in the flesh. In Galatians 6:15, Paul said it is, " . . . neither circumcision . . . nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." It's the new creation, it's regeneration, that matters. So, let's be careful that we don't put the emphasis on rites or rituals which Paul is going to go on next week as we see in this chapter to warn us about people saying, "You have to worship on a certain day, eat certain foods, follow dietary laws which are not the substance. They are not Christ. We have Christ, we have everything that we need."

Notice in verse 11, Paul says that, " . . . the circumcision made without hands." He's not talking about the actual rite that was a physical rite, he's talking about a circumcision of our hearts. He's talking about spiritual circumcision. He's talking about the circumcision of the heart. When Stephen was preaching in Acts 7 to Jews who were resistant to the gospel and not trusting Christ, he said, "Ye . . . uncircumcised in heart and ears,"—your hearts have become hardened. For the Christian, it signifies death to the sinful nature—the putting off or the putting away or the cutting off of the old, sinful nature. You need to keep that in mind.

When you are born again—this is a very important point—your old nature, and, again, what is the old nature? It's your sin capacity, your sin nature that you inherit from Adam. Do you know that the Bible teaches every human being born in the world inherits from Adam, acting as our federal head and our identification with Adam, a sinful bent, a sinful nature.

How many of you have raised children? How many of you were children? Any parent that has raised children knows kids have a sinful, rebellious nature. You say, "Not my children, they glow in the dark." Yeah, right. Isn't it funny one of the first words they learn is, "No!" Sometimes even before they say, "Mamma," or "Dada," they say, "No!" or they say, "Mine!" Who taught them that? Who teaches them how to lie? The parents don't sit down and say, "Now, look. When you're in a tight place, I'm going to teach you to do what's called lying. When I tell you not to eat the cookies, and you eat the cookies, make sure you wipe the crumbs off, make sure you smile, make sure you say, 'No, I didn't eat the cookies,' when you did eat the cookies, and you'll be fine." You don't teach them to lie, it just comes natural. It just flows. You have to teach them to tell the truth.

When you are born again, I'm trying to make this as simple as I can, you receive a new nature. Before you were born again, you only had one nature—Adamic, sinful, rebellious against God. When you are born again, you get a new nature. Now, take that word "nature" in order to try to understand it a little better, and think of it as a capacity. Some use the word principle. Now, there are some that say when you're saved, you absolutely have no more sinful nature. I disagree. I believe you still have a sinful nature, but you now have a new nature that if you yield to the new nature, that you have a capacity or an ability to live a life that pleases God which you did not have before you were saved. This is why Paul, in Romans 7, said, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" I believe Paul was a Christian, and he was struggling still with that sin nature. Not to discourage you, but you're going to battle with that until you go home to heaven to be with the Lord. That sin nature will be a battle all the way to the grave or to the rapture of the Church. But the more you yield to the new nature or capacity, the more you walk in the Spirit, the more you'll bring forth the likeness of Christ, the more you grow, the more victorious you are in the Lord.

In verse 11 notice the phrase, ". . . putting off the body of the sins of the flesh." How is it done? It's done by Christ, notice verse 11, ". . . by the circumcision of Christ." It's a spiritual operation that happens the moment when I am born again. When does it happen? Right at the moment of regeneration when I'm given new life at the moment of conversion. When you are saved your old sin nature, Romans 6:6, is described as being put out of business. Write that down, Romans 6:6, put out of business. Now, not annihilated, not eliminated, put out of business. The Greek word for that phrase is the word *katargéō* and do you know what it means? It means to render inoperative. The reason why we still can sin as a Christian is because we yield to that sin nature. Even though it's been rendered inoperative, we yield to the sinful nature and it produces sin in our lives.

Notice verse 12, "Buried with him in baptism," so now as believers when we're baptized, do you know what it symbolizes? It symbolizes the death of the old sinful nature or sin capacity. When

you go under the water, this is why I believe in total immersion, it's a picture of being buried, right? I've had people say, "Hold me down a long time, I've got a lot to bury." "Okay, I'll just swish you around for a little while, Father, Son, and Hoooooly Ghost." I've often thought it would be cool to baptize people out in Oceanside, throw them off the end of the pier, "Father, Son, and Holy Ghooooost!" If you get back, you're saved. Now, I don't mean to be flippant, I shouldn't kid about baptism.

Baptism is an outward showing of an inward work. It's a rite or a ritual. Water cannot save you, only the blood of Jesus Christ can cleanse from sin. It is a picture of being buried, that's why we celebrate baptism, and then when you come out of the water, and I've had people say, "Have you ever lost anyone? Have you ever slipped and they drowned? You're not going to let me down there too long, are you?" "No, I'll get you back up." But when you bring them back up, it's a resurrection. So, you bury the old you in the grave, and when you come out of the water it's the resurrection of Christ—identified with Christ's resurrection—and you come out a new creation, " . . . old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." You're a new creation in Christ.

That doesn't mean that you're never going to sin. The fact that the Bible uses the word *katargé* rendered inoperative, means that whoever we yield to whether the new nature that's given by God or we yield to the old nature is what will produce sin or righteousness. So, we're justified, but then it starts the process of being sanctified. You can use anything you plug into a wall outlet, but say a vacuum, because a vacuum makes a loud noise generally, and you plug in a vacuum and start to vacuum. Have you ever been vacuuming down a hallway and you get a little too far for your cord and BOOM! it pulls out of the wall and your vacuum makes a sound going off? What do you have to do? Plug it back in, right? That's the same thing with the old nature. It's been unplugged, so don't plug it back in. But sometimes we're tempted, and we yield to temptation. We plug it back in, and it roars to life. We need to leave it unplugged.

By the way, the parallel passage on how to walk in victory over the sinful nature is Romans 6, 7, and 8. In Romans, we're condemned, we're sinners, we're justified, and now we're sanctified, Romans 6, 7, and 8. If you want to go to our website and listen to my messages on that, they're all there how we are identified with Christ and that we should not walk by the law but, Romans 8, by walking in the Spirit, Romans 6, 7, and 8, where he says, I'll read Romans 6:3-4, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death," so if we are buried with Him in baptism into death, this is what's called spiritual baptism or spirit baptism.

Write down 1 Corinthians 12:13. Every believer, he says, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body,"—that's the church, the body of Christ—"whether we be Jews or Gentiles . . . have been all made to drink into one Spirit," so " . . . whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free," at the moment of conversion we're, " . . . all baptized into one body," which Christ is the head. So, in Christ all Christians have been circumcised—cutting away, *katargé* the old sinful nature—and baptized by the Spirit into Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. It happened the moment you were saved. Now, the way to implement this is Romans 6, know the

information, reckon the information or believe it, and then yield—know, reckon, and yield—are what Paul says in Romans 6.

Now, let's go to our second blessing that we all have as believers. Not only are we dead and buried with Christ, but in verses 12b-13a, in Christ we are risen and living, so we're not still in the grave. Look at verse 12b. He says, “. . . wherein also ye are,”—not, you might be; not, you hope to be; not, if you're lucky you will be—“risen with him,”—there's another identification with Christ, all Christians—“through the faith of the operation of God,”—so, it's a work of God, an operation of God—“who hath raised him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened,”—which means to be made alive, this is that regeneration or salvation or being born again—“together with him,” verse 13. Now, you are risen with Him, so baptism pictures death and resurrection.

How were we resurrected? Notice verse 12, “. . . through the faith of the operation of God.” Salvation is all God. Salvation is of the Lord. Yes, we trust Christ; yes, we believe in Jesus Christ, but He's the One that convicts us, He's the One that regenerates and indwells us, and seals us to the day of redemption, and places us in Jesus Christ. Again, it happens to every Christian the moment they believe on Jesus by faith.

The need for the resurrection life is in verse 13. Look at it with me. “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him,” stop right there. So, we are resurrected by Him, we are crucified in Christ, and we are risen with Christ. In Ephesians 2:5, “Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved).” In my King James translation, that phrase “quickened” there is an old English term which means made alive. Do you know how they came up with that? If you're dead, you're not very quick. It's true. So, if you're alive, you're quickened—you're given life. You're made alive the moment you are saved in Christ. You are risen with Christ to new life. I love this! How important this is to see. Baptism pictures our resurrection as well as our death with Christ.

Notice it's God's operation, verse 12, and notice also that your BC days are described as, “. . . being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh.” Then you were saved by being, “. . . quickened together with him.”

Some people conclude that because you're dead before salvation that God has to quicken you in order for you to believe to be saved. That view of salvation is what's called Calvinism, and I don't believe that's biblical. I believe that we're quickened by believing. You say, “Well, how do you believe if you're dead?” When the Bible uses the word “dead,” the etymology of the word “dead,” by the way, means separation. It doesn't necessarily mean cessation. Do you know that dead people are still alive? They've just left their bodies. They were separated from their bodies. Spiritually dead people still have a will. God doesn't violate our will. He convicts us, He draws us, but He doesn't force us. He helps us to come by faith, but it's our decision to trust Christ.

In John's gospel it says, "But these are written, that ye might believe . . . and that believing ye might have life through his name." He doesn't say you have to have life in order to believe, he says by believing you have life through His name. Now, I know I may have confused some of you or lost you there. You're wondering what in the world I'm talking about, but I wanted to share that I don't believe that regeneration precedes faith. The essence of Calvinism or reformed theology is that regeneration precedes faith, and they don't believe that we have anything to do with salvation. I don't see that taught in the Bible. I believe the moment you believe in Christ, you are regenerated. And, you believe in Christ because He convicts you, He convinces you, and He draws you by His Spirit.

You say, "Well, which is it? Do I believe so it's my decision, or does He save me by grace?" Both. You say, "Well, how does that work?" I don't know. That's not my job. My job is just to faithfully teach what the Bible teaches, and somehow they're reconciled in a higher unity. How do you have Father, Son, and Holy Spirit but only one God? I don't know, but isn't it awesome? How do you have men writing the Bible but it's the Word of God? I don't know. You say, "You don't know much, do you, Pastor?" I don't know. They reconcile in a higher unity. The secret things belong to God. I believe when we get to heaven we're going to know as we are known. We're going to say, "Wow! God, aren't You wise in how You saved sinners by Your grace!" What a marvelous truth that is.

Here's the third blessing. Write it down. In Christ we are forgiven and free. These truths are like, "Hallelujah! Praise God! Amen! Thank You, Jesus!" In Christ we are dead and buried, so all our sinful past is gone. In Christ we are risen and living, we have new life. We can walk in victory, we can walk in newness of life, we can walk in the power of the Spirit. We have a new nature, a new capacity, a new understanding of God in His Word.

Thirdly, at the end of verses 13-15, we are forgiven and free. Let's read the passage together. At the end of verse 13, " . . . having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross,"—Praise God!—"And having spoiled,"—which means to divest an enemy of its power and weapons—"principalities and powers,"—he conquered Satan and demonic powers—"he made a shew of them openly,"—how?—"triumphing over them in it,"—in His resurrection, ascension, and exaltation. There's no spiritual life without the forgiveness of sin.

I heard this crazy guy on YouTube the other day saying he met God through LSD. That's insane. "I dropped acid, I took LSD, and I found God." You might think you found God, in that induced state of whatever drug you are on, but there's only one way to come to God. Do you know what it is? By repentance and faith in Jesus Christ who's, " . . . the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." If you're wrong about Jesus, you're wrong about God. If you don't have Jesus, you don't have God. And, if you want to get to heaven, you can't go around the cross. "Well, I don't need Christianity, I'm just going to drop acid. I'm just going to take LSD." By the way, I can't believe that that's become popular once again. I started to say, "It blows my mind," but then you would've known I was a hippie back then and know all about that. (In hippie lingo) "It just blows my mind, man!"

The only way to get to heaven is through the cross of Christ. You can't get to heaven by sitting in the lotus contemplating your navel, I'll stop right there, or being baptized, being circumcised, being confirmed, catechism, keeping laws, rules and regulations, joining a church, going to church. That doesn't get you to heaven. It's only by coming to faith.

This Sunday, as we come back to our study in the book of Luke, we're going to begin what's called the Sermon on the Plain. The Sermon on the Plain is Luke's version of the Sermon on the Mount. It's a different sermon but a lot of the same content, and it starts with the beatitudes. So, we're going to be looking at the beatitudes this Sunday, which is the gateway or the entrance to heaven, and it starts with blessed are the poor in spirit. For you to get to heaven, you have to see yourself as a sinner, poor in spirit, and that Jesus is the Savior. You have to trust Him in order to be saved.

Now, if you want something to celebrate, celebrate forgiveness of sins. Amen? My sin has been forgiven, which means literally carried away. That's what the word "forgiveness" actually connotes, carried away. Remember they had the scapegoat—they would pronounce sin on the goat, and the goat would go running off into the distant hills. It would be symbolic or a picture of carrying my sins away. We don't need to know what your sins were, but for some of us they were great, for some of us they were plenteous, for some they were vile, they were dark, but all of them are washed and cleansed in the precious blood of Jesus Christ! You stand spotless before the throne, and you have been given the righteousness of Jesus Christ. You can't get any more righteous. No matter how wicked or sinful you were or dark your sinful past, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. When you became a Christian, God forgave all your sins.

Now, let me rip through a list of five facts about forgiveness. Not all of these come from the text. First, God's forgiveness is complete. God has forgiven all your trespasses, verse 13, you see that there in the text? Do you know what the word "all" means? You guessed it, all. All means all—every one of your sins. Satan comes along and says, "You're not forgiven. You don't deserve to be in church. Those people are forgiven. They're good people, they're godly, but you're a sinner! Look what you did in the past. Look how wicked your sin. Look how vile your sins." He wants to remind you of your sin. Don't listen to him. Your sins have been forgiven. When does it happen? The moment you were born again, the moment you were given new life, the moment you believed in Jesus.

Here's the second fact about forgiveness, God's forgiveness is gracious. Write down Romans 3:24. Paul says, "Being justified freely by his grace," so justification or salvation or forgiveness is gracious and it's freely given. That's what grace is. Thirdly, God's forgiveness is certain. This is something to rejoice in. Notice it says we are forgiven all our sins. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." If you believe that, that settles that. You just stand in that.

Let me give you three quick ways to know you're saved: 1) the Word of God the Father; 2) the work of God the Son; 3) the inner witness of God the Holy Spirit. How do I know I'm saved?

God said so in His Word, Jesus did the work on the cross, and the witness of the Holy Spirit changing my heart and my life—the new nature, new appetite. I used to hate Christianity and the things of God, now I love that. I used to love my sin, now I hate my sin. The things I used to love, I hate; the things I used to hate, I love. It's a sign of the inner witness.

Fourthly, write it down, God's forgiveness is motivating. Ephesians 4:32, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." There's a whole sermon in that statement. Do you know that if you have been forgiven by God you need to be forgiving of others who have sinned against you? You come to the cross to be forgiven, you stay at the cross to be forgiving. You can't be a Christian and be unforgiving toward others who've sinned against you. You can't expect God to forgive your sins if you're not willing to forgive others who've sinned against you. So, any unforgiveness, any bitterness, any hatred, any animosity, if you've been born again, you should be willing to forgive others who have sinned against you. It doesn't mean you have to be their best buddy or best friend, but it means you no longer have hatred or anger or unforgiveness toward them, you forgive them. It's motivating. It's so important.

Fifthly, God's forgiveness is liberating, verse 14. Look at the text, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances,"—the laws and the commandments that condemned us, do this and live the law commands, but gives me neither feet nor hands. It's called the handwriting of ordinances—"that was against us,"—the law is holy, righteous, just and good—"which was contrary to us,"—the problem is not the law, the problem is us. And what did He do at the cross? ". . . and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross," so we're free from the penalty of the law, and we're free from the power of sin.

But don't blame the law. You know, we have a tendency when we break the law to blame the law. When I'm driving down the street and get pulled over and given a ticket, I get mad that the speed limit is too low and I think it should be raised. I'm driving by a public school and I think the speed limit should be 75 miles an hour. Those kids can get out of the way. I get a big fat ticket. It's not the law, it's you! You're a transgressor of the law.

Did you notice that he used that word "trespasses." Do you know what that word means when he talks about sin? Willful, deliberate disobedience. It literally means to step over the line, trespasses. It's not the Greek word hamartia, which means missing the mark—I'm trying hard, but I miss and fail. It means I rebelliously, deliberately step over the line, and I disobey God. So, not only does He forgive my failures, He forgives my rebellious disobedience, my transgressions. Forgiveness is liberating. It means I'm free from the law's debt and from condemnation.

Notice in verse 14 what Jesus did for us at the cross real quickly. "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us,"—secondly,—“and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.” Remember when He died on the cross He said, “It is finished,” paid in full. Can't come back to prosecute or condemn us. Thirdly, “And having spoiled,”—Satan's—“principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in

it,”—in His victory.

That phrase, “triumphing over them in it,” is a picture of what was called the Roman triumph. This isn’t talking about a motorcycle, it’s talking about a parade. It was a victor’s parade. It’s used a couple of times by Paul in the New Testament where a Roman general that would go out and fight a battle against another nation, when he won the war he would bring back in a parade, like a ticker-tape parade today, right down the main street of Rome he would actually bring the spoils of the battle, he would bring the captives of the battle, and then there would be incense and trumpeters, flute players, and a big celebration. They would be bringing back the captives in chains. They would even sometimes strap or chain them to the wheels of their chariots. They became human hubcaps, and they’re rejoicing over their victory. This is a picture of a triumph parade.

Paul talks about it in Corinthians, we’ve triumphed in Christ. This is the triumph of Christ over the enemy, so they come into the Roman city and celebrate the triumph of the general, so Jesus Christ has triumphed over sin, death, Satan, and the grave, and “. . . we are more than conquerors,” in Christ. Amen?

Remember, all this is true about all Christians. If you’re sitting here tonight thinking, Well, that’s not about me because I’ve only been a Christian a short time and I haven’t grown much, or I’m not a really good Christian, I’m not a really strong Christian, I’ve got a lot of growth to do. No, you had been dead. You’ve died, you’re buried, you’re risen, you’re forgiven, you’re free. Now, walk in the newness of life. R. Kent Hughes says, “Total forgiveness is something to celebrate. It is beyond anything positive thinking, therapy, or hypnosis can provide. It is complete, extending to the conscious and unconscious sins in our lives.”

You know, I like to look at stories in the Bible that relate spiritual truth. Remember when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead? You’re supposed to say, “Yes.” Thank you. We’re almost done. Jesus stood before the grave of Lazarus who was dead. What did He say? “Lazarus . . .” “Wait, wait, wait! He’s dead! What’re you doing talking to the dude? Talking to a guy that’s been dead for three days?” “Hey! Come on out!” What happened? He came out. Whoa! That’s power! We were dead, and He spoke by His Spirit to our hearts, and we were given new life. Amen?

There was another thing Jesus said. What did He say next? When Lazarus came out of the grave, how was he dressed? In grave clothes, right? He said, “Loose him, and let him go.” He wasn’t going to walk around the rest of his life in grave clothes like a mummy. A lot of Christians have been born again, but they’re still wearing the grave clothes of the old life, and Jesus says, “Loose them, and let them go.” Jesus told the woman taken in adultery, “I don’t condemn you, but go and sin no more.” He wants us to walk in holiness. Lazarus was loosed and set free, and the next time you see Lazarus and Jesus, they’re sitting together eating in their house at a table. So, we’re dead, we’re risen, we’re free, and we’re seated with Christ in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. This is why Paul said in Romans 6, “Know it, believe it, and yield to it.” Let’s pray.