



“Raised with Him”
Colossians 2:11-15
February 13, 2022

In case you did not know, today is Super Bowl Sunday. Today the Los Angeles Rams are going to be playing the Cincinnati Bengals for the NFL Championship in Super Bowl LVI (56). The Rams and the Bengals will be playing in the new SoFi Stadium, not too far from here in Inglewood, California. I have to let you know that I am in fact interested in the game. I am a fan of the Los Angeles Rams, and I do hope they win!

We will see what happens, but, let me say this: whether they win or lose, brothers and sisters, we are part of a much greater triumph that the Lord Jesus Christ has accomplished for His church. It is a triumph that is beyond comparison. It is my prayer that as we look at what the Bible says about it this morning, that our hearts will be elevated and lifted up with praise for the King Jesus, and for new strength in Him.

This morning we set our hearts upon the glorious victory that Jesus Christ achieved for the salvation of His people. As we go into what is revealed for us in the Scripture, let us first and foremost understand that Christ is presented to us as THE hero; as THE winning Warrior; as THE Savior, who saves His people from the clutches of darkness.

This being understood and appreciated and this producing praise in our hearts, let us also perceive and understand that Jesus the Victor does not leave His people up in the spectator seats. Neither does He leave us on the sidelines. Having saved us and redeemed us, He involves us in the ongoing struggle against false doctrine and deceptive spirits that do inhabit this world that we are living in.

That is what the book of Colossians is all about. It is all about a Preeminent Savior King. His name is Jesus, who by His grace raises people to new life. He saves them. He cleanses them, and He works to transform them. He involves them in the battle that He is waging in this world. They are involved in the glorious effort, empowered by His Spirit, to spread the knowledge of His gracious salvation, bringing people from darkness into the light of His Kingdom and His love. Jesus saves and He implements His people.

This is what we will be seeing this morning. Our focus is going to be on Colossians Chapter 2 and Verses 11 through 15, but we are going to start our reading back in Verse 6, because Verses 11 through 15 are a continuation of that train of thought. So, let's read what God's Word has to say for us in Colossians Chapter 2, starting in Verse 6:

⁶Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

⁸See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.

¹¹In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, ¹²having 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. ¹³And 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, ¹⁴by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

What a marvelous picture of our Savior and the life that He brings us. Here in the text that we just read, we have a beautiful doctrinally rich portion of Scripture.

The colossal view of the deity of Christ that we received in Chapter 1 in another theologically rich portion, is now supplemented with the triumphant view of the victory of Christ that is portrayed for us in this portion of Scripture. Christ is revealed as the triumphant Savior of His people. Christ is Savior! Christ is Redeemer!

And what we see in this is something of a paradox because Christ is one of unique strength. Yet, this same Christ, He is not at all going to leave His people without strength. He is going to cause them to grow in the strength that only He can give.

As we look at what is here in the text of God's Word for us this morning, let us celebrate the Hero whose name is Jesus. Let's praise God that by His grace, He has redeemed us from darkness and brought us into the Kingdom of Light.

As we see what is written in the pages of Scripture, let's understand that Jesus, being the King over an Everlasting Kingdom...

He is not intending to have a kingdom inhabited by those who are insecure or by those who are nervous or by those who are walking around constantly in a feeble condition. Neither is He interested in a kingdom that is filled with people who are self-assured and who think that they have strength in themselves.

Rather, Christ the Savior intends to help His people to grow in His strength; to grow in maturity; to grow as a church into mature manhood, so that we can walk in this dark world, spreading the fragrance of His Kingdom and the one Savior who is our Lord.

This morning I want for us to be looking at the glorious measures Christ has taken to save us, understanding that these are also measures that He has taken to strengthen us and to get us into the game where we will follow Him in spreading the knowledge of His saving grace.

Let's take a look at what is here and let's see the measures He has taken make those who are in Christ strong and mature and edified and built up in Him.

Here in this text I think we are going to see four measures that Christ has taken to make us mature and strong. First, we will see that in Christ, God has severed your sin nature. Second, God has raised you with Christ. Third, God has forgiven your sin debt. Fourth, God has disarmed your enemies. Revitalizing, strengthening truths for the heart of the child of God

Measures God has taken to strengthen you. First:

1. God has severed your sin nature. (V. 11)

Let's see the language that Paul used for this here in Verse 11:

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

Throughout his writings, what we see is that the Apostle Paul used the term flesh to speak of the ongoing principal of sin in the human being. It is not so much that we are to view the human body as something that is bad. In fact, it is very easy for us to recognize that the human body is fearfully and wonderfully made. But since the fall of Adam in the Garden, what we find is that there is a propensity toward evil that is bound up in the human condition. This is the sin nature and Paul often used the word flesh to speak of it.

When Christ is saving somebody, when Christ is coming with His saving grace, He comes as the Good Physician, providing a spiritual circumcision that is spoken of in this passage of Scripture. That old sin nature is severed so that we are not dominated by it anymore. So that moving forward in this walk with Christ, there is a new sensitivity toward the ways of the Lord and sensitivity toward the offense and the destructiveness of sin. It is this sensitivity toward these things that Christ is giving us so that we will have victory over sin, which is toxic to the soul.

As you go forward in this week, what we find as Christians is that even with the severing of the sin nature, there are still lingering affects with sin. You and I will still be tempted toward sin even this very week. At the same time, with this gracious work that Christ has done, you are going to find that the Holy Spirit is making you sensitive to forms of sin which previously could have been carried out without a second thought.

It could be this week that somebody is disrespectful and they say something that is not complementary about you. There might be an impulse in you that tells you to use your tongue to say something about them. Maybe it will be gossip or something like that but with this circumcision that Christ provides, there is a new sensitivity toward how the body is designed by God to be used, and you are going to be reminded by the work of the Holy Spirit that God did not give you a tongue to gossip with and to say mean things about people with. God has given you a tongue to build up and it is the circumcision that Christ gives that helps make us sensitive to these things.

It might be that you are tempted to use your eyes to gaze upon illicit images on screen or to use your body for the purposes of sexual impurity, using the gift of sex in ways that God did not design. But the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the circumcision of Christ is going to make you sensitive toward these things, leading you on the path of righteousness, leading you away from the misuse of the body in sin.

There is a sclerosis of heart that we have received as those who were connected to Adam, but there is the circumcision of heart that Christ provides that makes us sensitive where we need to be sensitive, that we might grow in the ways of holiness rather than being hardened in the dominion of sin.

This is the work of Jesus the Savior to help His people and to empower them in the battle against sin that they might grow into maturity. This is the work that the Spirit is doing among us, so be praying this week, “Make me sensitive to the damage of sin and help me to walk and to grow in the ways of holiness and love.”

So what does Christ do to make the inhabitants and the citizens of His Kingdom strong? The first thing that we see in this portion of Scripture is that He is severing the sin nature and He is giving us a sensitivity toward the will of the Lord in how we live our lives.

We continue and we see that there are more measures that God has taken to strengthen you in the Lord. Second:

2. God has raised you with Christ. (V. 12)

We will start in Verse 11 because it is all one sentence that is given to us here in Verses 11 and 12, Verse 12 being where we read of this resurrection in the Lord that we are now experiencing.

¹¹In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, ¹²having 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.

Here we see the powerful working of God in relation to Christ in His victory over the grave and which is applied in the Christian life as well.

As you know, this world is filled with all kinds of power. You go back about two-hundred and fifty-years, there was probably a whole lot of horse power that was being implemented. And ox power. Then soon after came the discovery of locomotive power. Then pretty soon there was the discovery of electric power, which is something that we are familiar with.

We even know that there is hydraulic power. There is solar power. I think how it works is that even in the splitting of atoms, there is something that is called nuclear power, which comes with devastating force. God has planted all of these different forms of power in the created realm for us to discover and to harness.

However, there is a form of power that no human being has been able to harness. It is a power that is unique to God. It is the greatest power. We are talking about resurrection power. It is a kind of supernatural power that takes that which was dead, and by that I mean cold dead without life and raises it up to vitality, renewal, and perfect health. This is resurrection power.

Here in this text, Paul was teaching the church that the greatest of all powers—that power that was applied at the garden tomb of the Christ, raising Him up in resurrection—has also been applied in each believing heart. You were dead in your sins and God has raised you up in Christ. That is what is being spoken of here. In Christ the Christian is raised up to newness.

This is not talking about the physical resurrection of the dead. This is talking about spiritual resurrection. We have a word in theology for it. It is regeneration. It is being born again. Each one who is in Christ is raised in Christ and is living in Christ now as they look forward to the resurrection of the body when King Jesus comes back to this earth in power and glory.

Here in this text we see that this resurrection power of the Lord is portrayed in the symbol and in the rite of believer's baptism. Baptism is one of the signs and seals of the gracious covenant by which God binds Himself to His people.

It is like the covenant that I have with my wife, Kristy, and I have this ring as a sign of that covenant. In every wedding ceremony there is this very, very significant and powerful moment when the vows have been made and the rings are placed as an ongoing sign and seal of the covenant. So in baptism we have this wonderful sign and seal of the covenant of grace by which we have been born again in Christ.

The imagery that Paul laid out is beautiful and it is profound. Those of you who have been baptized, immersed into this picture of saving grace, you are involved in a portrayal of burial. You were united with Christ in His atoning death. And in the pool of baptism, a powerful symbol of this death is being portrayed in how you are immersed in all of the saving benefits of the atonement of Christ, buried with Him in baptism.

That is only one part of the picture because yes Christ died on the cross and yes Christ was buried and He was placed in the tomb, but did he remain in that tomb? No, He did not! On the third day He was raised up from death in resurrection life and in baptism there is this portrayal of our union with Christ in His resurrection.

As Christ is risen, so first He raises His people from spiritual death and that is looking forward to the time when He is going to raise us up in physical resurrection as well. Never to experience a cold or even the slightest case of the sniffles ever again. Raised up. Imperishable. Powerful. With a glorious spiritual body that is tangible, yet absolutely saturated with the power of the Holy Spirit.

We have this picture of resurrection that is portrayed in baptism. This is something that points us to the reality of the work that God has done in our lives by His grace through the agency of faith that His grace leads us through.

If you are in Jesus by confessing your sin and saying that you are a sinner and Jesus is the answer, you have been raised in Christ. You have everlasting life and being born again, you will not die spiritually. You are born in Him, raised up.

Baptism is just such a powerful portrayal of that. Those of you who have not been baptized and you would say, “Yes, I am a believer. I believe in Jesus Christ. He is my Savior and He is my Lord,” but you have not been baptized, it is time to get baptized! Not only because Christ commanded it, but because it is a wonderful and joyous celebratory picture and means of grace for the church, encouraging us in the life that God gives.

It is time to get baptized. If you are a believer, let’s do it! Out in the foyer, you will find some pieces of paper that talks about baptism and how we go about it here at church. Follow Christ through the waters of baptism.

If you are here and you have been baptized, even if you were baptized decades ago, I would encourage you to give some serious thought to your baptism and think about it often, because there were glorious realities that were at work in your baptism. Just thinking about it continues to edify. Plunged into the death and the saving benefits of the cross, raised in new life. Thinking about being raised up in Christ, brothers and sisters, be empowered in the life that Jesus leads you in. Raised up.

Do you want to know the glory of the life that Christ leads you in? How does this triumphant life in Christ appear as those born anew in Jesus? Raised up in Christ?

He does not raise you up so that you will have a big ego and a big head, seeking to be the lord of your own domain. No, Christ is Lord and we are raised up following Christ in the way of humble service and that’s where the power is found. The power of the Kingdom is found in following Christ in loving, humble service that He leads us in. We need to be saying, “Lord, remind me of that and empower me in that.” Every morning, we need to be reminded that we have been raised up in Christ in order that we might serve in His pattern.

I don’t know about you, but here is how we tend to think. We don’t wake up in the morning in and of ourselves say, “Okay, how am I going to serve and be a blessing to my spouse, to the kids, to the neighbors, and to the other people in the church? What am I going to do to serve them.” Instead, I wake and I have my morning routine and nobody better interrupt it. Or what is somebody going to do to be a blessing to me?!

And being raised up in Christ, He is going to reorient us to ask how we can serve others. This is the Risen Christ-life that Christ leads us in. There is strength that is found in serving in the pattern of Jesus.

We continue and see that there is more here for us in this glorious text in the way God is making us strong in the salvation that Jesus gives us.

Measures God has taken to strengthen you. Third:

3. God has forgiven your sin debt. (Vv. 13-14)

Oh what a liberating effect this text has on us here as we take it to heart in the power of the Spirit. God has forgiven the sin debt of each follower of Christ. Let's look at Verses 13 and 14:

¹³And 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, ¹⁴by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

I want to tell you about what is for many, many, many people a filthy, nasty, dirty little piece of plastic. That little piece of plastic has buried countless people. It is called a credit card. With a credit card you can buy things without paying cash. Potentially with a credit card, you could go and purchase things that you have no money to buy. For countless people, it has been all too tempting to keep swiping the card and accruing massive debt to the point of being buried in it.

Every time a person sins against the holiness of the Lord, against the Law of the Lord, it is like a card is being swiped. It is not so much that it is a financial debt that is accruing, rather instead it is a legal debt. God has emphatically revealed in the page of the Old Testament and in the New that He is Judge. God has a Law by which He governs His universe and it is a good Law and we are accountable to it. Each person is going to be judged according to the Law of the Lord.

Just like it is with a credit card, because people don't have to answer for it immediately, they just keep swiping the card. So it is with sin, because there is no immediate accountability we think we will never be held accountable. Meanwhile there is a list of infractions according to the Scripture here before us that is being kept and it is accumulating and it is increasing.

Meanwhile, let's also understand that every sin that we commit, it incurs an eternal penalty. We are finite beings, but we are sinning against the Law and against the holiness of an infinite Being. We have all sinned enumerable times, each requiring everlasting judgment.

Making things even worse, all the attempts that we make to pay off the debt ourselves just increases the debt because our attempts at righteousness are also infected with sin. Through the Prophet Isaiah, the Lord revealed that our works of righteousness are like filthy rags.

So according to Scripture, we find ourselves in a dire situation. There is this massive accumulation of legal debt that is stacking up, stacking up, stacking up and according to this text, it stands against us. It is a serious situation and it is real.

But, there is good news!

But, hallelujah, there is a Friend to sinners to be found. Better, there is a Friend to sinners who has revealed Himself. Hallelujah, brothers and sisters, what a friend we have in Jesus. The very name Jesus means the Lord saves. Praise the Lord!

Hallelujah, what a friend we have in the One who is the infinite God who has assumed for Himself human nature. What a friend we have in the One who is the fullness of God now found in bodily human form! What a friend we have in the One who came into the world and fulfilled the righteous demands of the Holy Law of God to perfection. What a friend we have in the One willing to take our sin upon Himself and pay the price for it with His own blood. What a friend we have in Jesus.

What freedom there is found in the hearts and in the lives of those who know that they have been forgiven. The debt cleared. The burden removed. All of that sin gone. Taken away. You are forgiven not because God looked upon your life and said, "Ah, maybe they are not so bad after all." Yes, you are! So am I.

We are forgiven because Jesus took our sin and He was punished as though He was the sinner, so that the holiness and the righteousness and the integrity of God is upheld. Sinners finding their place in Him are set free and born again. This is good news. Oh, I pray that this is having a strengthening effect on the soul, because this is good news.

A hymn writer of yesteryear named Philip Bliss discovered the meaning of his own name in this glorious reality. In what was some regard as the greatest verse ever written in any hymn, Philip Bliss (providing the melody to Horatio Stafford's lyric) leads in praise:

My sin, oh the bliss of this glorious thought
My sin, not in part, but the whole
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul

So deep within, Bliss found this fount of praise opening up to the Savior. In that praise and in that gratitude, there is strengthening for following the Savior, the Hero, the King, in a darkened world filled with people who are dying under the burden of sin.

So Christ calls us to gather with the company of the forgiven and the redeemed that we might provoke one another in the good deeds of the Kingdom that He has saved us to by His grace. We are in the game. We are saved from the domain of darkness, and Christ equips us and He wants to work through us to advance His glorious Kingdom that is comprised of sinners saved by grace.

As if all of this was not enough, behold, there is more. Measures God has taken to strengthen you, four and finally:

4. God has disarmed your spiritual enemies. (V. 15)

Throughout the pages of Scripture, demonic forces are referred to as rulers and authorities. Satan exist. Demons exist. You cannot see them with your eyes, but they are there. They are organized. Different parts of the Bible indicate that some demons are assigned to particular geographic locations.

So there are rules and authorities overseeing their efforts and organization and your record of debt was their ammunition against you. But they have been disarmed, haven't they? What does God Word tell the church? Let's start back in Verse 14, where we read about how God has cancelled the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.

14 ...This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. 15He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Disarmed! I wonder how many of you have had the terrible misfortune of having a gun stuck in your face or pulled up on you.

This has only happened to me once way back in high school. There was a group of us on our front lawn and a crazy man riding rode passed us on his ten speed bike. This man looked at us and pulled out a gun and said, "Don't mess with me!" We said we would not and we ran back in the house to safety. It was over in a split second, but my heart was racing so fast.

Imagine somebody who hates you and the barrel of gun is stuck right in your face. They want you to die. They pull the trigger and you hear a click. Then another click. Click. Click. Click. Click. No ammunition! They can't put a bullet in you, because the ammunition has been removed. What a relief!

This is what we see in this text. Through Christ, God has disarmed the rulers and authorities. Satan has always weaponized guilt. Now that your guilt has been removed, even though Satan may try to whisper guilt in your ear, the guilt does not remain because Christ took it away. It is not that Satan is there with a gun that does not have any bullets in it. He doesn't even have a weapon in his hand.

You are in a similar situation as Joshua the High Priest. In Israel's history is that wonderful account we had read earlier. There was Joshua the High Priest and he was in soiled garments, and there was Satan to accuse him. One of my favorite things about that story is that Satan was not even allowed a single word.

You see Satan there but he said nothing, because the Angel of the Lord had stepped in; the Angel of the Lord being Old Testament code language for the Messiah. When you hear 007, who do think of? James Bond! Likewise, you see the Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament and you find you are dealing with a divine figure—the preincarnate Christ. And there was Satan wanting to accuse, but the preincarnate Christ, Angel of the Lord, did not even let him get a word in.

This text says to remove those filthy garments from him and, behold, you are given clothing. This is the work of grace that God does in His people. By God's grace we are saved and we are trusting in the Messiah, Jesus Christ. There is no one who can condemn. There is no one who can disqualify us from the Kingdom of Christ, because Christ has qualified us. Chris has brought us into His Kingdom and there is nothing any demon can do about it, though they would like to.

Finally, what we see here is that it is not just that God in Christ has disarmed these foes. He has in fact triumphed over them. We see here this here in this text.

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

What a triumph accomplished by Jesus Christ! One way or the other there is going to be a triumph for one team later on this afternoon going into the evening. I hope the Rams win. With a victory one way or the other, hundreds of thousands of people will be rejoicing in the triumph. I will be stoked if the Rams win but in the end, what difference does it make?

I will enjoy the game but a year from now, what difference is it going to make? Ten years from, now difference is it going to make? One hundred years from now, even in the lives of those who are playing in the game, what difference is it going to make? Maybe if there are some believers who are using the platform to the glory of Jesus Christ, there might be some ripple affect but for the most part, what difference is going to make?

Meanwhile, think of the triumph of Christ, the triumph achieved at a cosmic level with myriads upon myriads upon myriads of angels looking on. Demonic forces thought they were achieving a victory. As scorn and salvia and hate were being showered upon the Messiah, they thought that they were winning but in fact, Christ was atoning. In fact, Christ was redeeming. In fact, Christ was forgiving and reconciling. In fact, Christ was purchasing. And when the last drop of divine justice from the cup of wrath was poured out, Christ called out with the victory call, IT IS FINISHED! Tetelestai!

It was all that these demonic forces could do was to just watch what Christ achieved. It like in their faces! All they could do was to watch as Christ concluded the work of salvation in His glorious atonement. Later that day, it was all they could do to watch when Christ ushered the thief on the cross into Paradise, according to His promise.

It was all they could do but watch when three days later, Christ rose from the grave. It was all they could do but watch when forty days later, Christ ascended to the Father. It was all they could do but watch when fifty-days-later on the day of Pentecost, Christ poured out His Spirit upon His church, thus multiplying His presence in an army of sinners saved by grace, who will walk in that profound paradox of themselves being weak but in Him, built up and made strong as they walk in the power of the Spirit that Jesus gives as a gift.

This is the good news, and I hope and I pray that the Living Word of God enters into our hearts; that it gives us perspective, because life in this world is hard but we have a Savior who reigns forever and He calls us into eternity. He is strengthening the likes of us, having forgiving sin through faith to bring glory to His Great Name, to manifest His Great Kingdom on this earth, and to let people know that there is salvation for sinners in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

With this, let's close in prayer.