

It's all about Jesus: Death, Debt, and Disarmament (Colossians 2:13-17)

Introduction

-

I am dead in my sins (2:13)

- God's Word continually sets the stage of our present condition. We are all dead men walking.
- This death in the sense that Paul uses the word here, refers especially to condemnation, a **present state** that afflicts all humans in their natural state because of Adam's original sin.
 - Death is not a future condition.... It's our present situation.
 - Spiritual death does not wait... its current. Its real time not tape delayed
- **What we see in Scripture is that we begin dead not alive.**
 - Often we are fooled into thinking naturally. Naturally our lives begin with our natural birth. When we were traumatically delivered, slapped, and put under a heat lamp. From that moment your life began. But may we not equate our understanding of natural birth into our assumption of our spiritual birth.
 - This is why Jesus said "you must be born again." If you have not been born again you are currently not born. You are dead spiritually. **Have you been born again?**
 - **If you have been born again... quit acting like you birthed yourself. How foolish would it be for my children to take all the credit for their birth.**
 - **When we live as if we are partly to credit for our righteousness....**
- **Natural death is a permanent condition. Spiritual death is an eternal consequence.**
 - One of the devastating effects of natural death is that it severs relationships.
 - **I have sat with couples married 50+ years. And the number one heart break is that their beautiful relationships cannot continue as it once was.**
 - Spiritual death is the same... if we are dead then we have ZERO relationships.
- **BUT → He has made you ALIVE!**
 - The greater your dead condition.... Oh the more power of Salvation.
 - Jesus knows exactly what you need. Before I knew I was dead Jesus knew I needed life.
 - **This is why he ROSE from the dead. We dead people need to see that resurrection is possible.**
 - Not only is resurrection possible... it is offered to us!
 - The greater the death the more thankful we must be for life.

- Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.”
 - Rejoice! Living people rejoice. Don't look like death warmed over

- Say it with me... I was DEAD but He made me ALIVE

I owe a debt I cannot pay (2:14)

- So how does this death – life transaction take place? Is it automatic? Is it for everyone? Is it only for church folk?
- **Here is how Jesus offers us salvation. He wiped out the handwriting**
 - So what is written and in whose hand is this note written?
 - The word handwriting in Greek is a composition of two words hand (xier) and to write (grapho). It is properly an autograph and especially a note of hand or a bond.
 - Colossians gives us a graphic picture that all human beings have signed an IOU in which we pledge complete allegiance to God.
 - But this is an IOU you have no intention to pay and if you even try... you have no way to pay it.
 - As many as two-thirds of Europeans arriving in the Colonies were debtors, paying their way as indentured servants. Debtors through colonial times and the first 40 years of the Republic routinely got locked up in brutal prisons, – often for very small amounts. There the debtor would stay, half-starved and dependent upon alms from passers-by, until someone – usually a relative – paid the debt.
 - This is why religion and church feels like a prison sentence to so many... they are merely religious to pay off their debt.
- **Jesus takes your spiritual eternal IOU and took it away**
 - The debt I owe and cannot pay... this debtor's prison I have endured has been paid.
 - In Christ Jesus we find payment for our sins.
 - Its as if you find 10,000,000 dollars deposited in your account tomorrow.
 - Not only has he paid your debt he took it away removing the “certificate of indebtedness”
 - Some of you are still holding onto your debt. Jesus will not force you to hand over your sin debt. He will not “rip it out of your hand”
- He also Nailed my debt to the cross showing it was HIS accomplishment.
- If your debt has been paid.... You don't have to try to work for to pay it off. Be free! Be free to praise, thank, and glory in the Cross!

Jesus paid it all,
All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain,

He washed it white as snow
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow

O Praise the one who paid my debt
And raised this life up from the dead
O Praise the one who paid my debt

- I was dead in my trespasses but He wiped out my handwritten IOU

He has disarmed powers in my life (2:15-17)

- Listen to this important spiritual principle → If Christ has released you from spiritual prison... NEVER – GO – BACK
- From the great steeple of St Mary's church a bugle has been sounded every day for the last 700 years. The last note on the bugle is always muted and broken, as if some disaster had befallen the bugler. This 700-year-old commemoration is a memory of a heroic trumpeter who one night summoned the people to defend their city against the invading tartars. As he was sounding the blast on the last trumpet an arrow from one of the Tartars struck and killed him. So there is always a muffled note at the end The Kraovians have never forgotten this heroic warning. In the same way Paul warns the church of deadly arrows (Hughes).
- **God delivered us from every power that would try to claim title to our lives, to win possession of us, or generally to bring harm to us. (NIV).**
 - For some, this election season tried to claim a title in your life. Do not let it win possession. Do not take any label other than a follower of Jesus Christ!
- **This is the victory of the Cross and the power of the resurrection in your life. Jesus disarms the powers of this world.**
 - Disarmed == conveys the sense always of “someone stripping the clothes off someone else” see Matt. 27:28
 - Behind the scenes on Golgotha, not visible to any of the spectators. Jesus' captors dragged him through the city, stripped him naked, held him up to contempt, and nailed the charges against him to this cross, but all along God was doing it to them.
 - God made them a public example by showing how utterly impotent they were before this divine demonstration of love (NIV).
 - Even though these little “powers” still exist they are defeated and weak.
- **God's victory in your life and victory over the powers of this world are not a private matter. Jesus makes a public spectacle of them!**
 - The idea of public display is strongly accentuated in Greek and alludes to the Roman custom of awarding victorious generals a “victory parade.” Behind as rode in splendor through the city would follow, in chains prisoners from the successful campaign just concluded.
 - Are you holding onto sins, chains, ideals, that are holding you captive? Maybe today you need to celebrate in public the victory God has given you in private.

- Maybe today Jesus is going to make a public triumph over “powers” that you have been battling you behind the scenes.
- **Church → God’s victory is not private → Do not keep it private!!**
- He has disarmed the powers and principalities. He has disarmed and delivered you from everything that tries to claim title in your life.

Conclusion

- Our problem with the law as humans is our refusal to trade on a curve. Performing at 99.99% still earns us an F minus and a death sentence for our failure. (NIV)

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

-
- By sitting in your seat you are agreeing that you are right with God and do not today need to profess Him as Lord.
- Do you have a Savior Story?

Why does it Matter?

- We have been justified (made right before the Lord) and accepted
- We receive forgiveness (redeemed)
- We escape God's wrath (reconciled)
- We are adopted in to a new family
- We gain a new identity (New Creation)
- **Believe, Confess, Faith, Baptism**

Notes

Col. 2:11 In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,

- “circumcision” is rather understood as a sacramental rite by which a person entered the community and gained access to salvation (Lohse).
- The with Christ language Paul uses here is the tip of an important Pauline theological iceberg (Moo).
 - As all people were somehow included in Adam when he sinned and brought death into the world so all people were in Christ when he died, was buried, and was raised to new life.

12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with *Him* through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. **13** And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,

- Paul uses baptism as a symbol of our death to the old life and resurrection to new life (Moo).
- Water baptism as a critical NT rite intimately connected to our conversion experience, could be used as shorthand for the whole experience (Moo).
- As we see also in Romans 6:3-11 both texts assert that believers have been “buried with Christ in baptism”
- This addition reminds us that baptism, while important in its own right at a natural component of conversion-initiation, have no power apart from faith (Moo).
- Dead
 - This death in the sense that Paul uses the word here, refers especially to condemnation, a present state that afflicts all humans in their natural state because of Adam’s original sin (Moo).
- Having forgiven
 - Most translations suggest that it designates an action that precedes the making alive.
- Dead is the description of the spiritual state of every human being who is apart from Christ (Hughes).
 - Without Christ we can do nothing to get Christ

14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. **15** Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

- The debtor issues a certificate of indebtedness in his own hand as an acknowledgement of his outstanding debt (Lohse).
- God has not only destroyed the debt, but has also removed the “certificate of indebtedness.” (Lohse)
- The forgiveness that we enjoy in Christ is total “All our sins” (Moo)
 - 2 word pics here.
 - First Paul portrays a document that all human beings have signed an IOU in which we pledge complete allegiance to God
 - Secondly, he nailed it to the cross showing His accomplishment
- **The handwriting** (τὸ χειρόγραφον). The A.V. has simply translated according to the composition of the noun, *χείρ hand*, *γράφω to write*. Properly *an autograph*, and specially *a note of hand, bond*. Compare Tobit 5:3; 9:5. Transcribed, *chirographus* and *chirographon*, it appears often in Latin authors, especially in law-books. So Juvenal, of a rascally neighbor, who declares his *note of hand*

void, and the tablets on which it is written as so much useless wood (16:41). Suetonios, of the promise of marriage given by Caligula to Ennia Naevia “under oath and bond” (chirographo, “Caligula,” 12).

- **What is this handwritten note?**
 - Early church thought this was a reference to a document signed by Adam and held over us by Satan
 - Jewish tradition = a manuscript recording human deeds that is brought out as a basis for judgement in heavenly court
 - Mosaic law?
- Requirements?
 - The decrees of God we have failed to keep
- By nailing it to the cross the IOU has been decisively removed
- “the powers of evil, which had clung like a Nessus robe about His humanity, were torn off and cast aside for ever –Lightfoot.
- Disarmed == conveys the sense always of “someone stripping the clothes off someone else” see Matt. 27:28
 - The third colorful metaphor. Behind the scenes on Golgotha, not visible to any of the spectators. Jesus’ captors dragged him through the city, stripped him naked, held him up to contempt, and nailed the charges against him to this cross, but all along God was doing it to them. God made them a public example by showing how utterly impotent they were before this divine demonstration of love (NIV).
- God’s victory over the powers did not remain a private matter: making a public spectacle of them.
 - The idea of public display is strongly accentuated in Greek and alludes to the Roman custom of awarding victorious generals a “victory parade.” Behind as rode in splendor through the city would follow, in chains prisoners from the successful campaign just concluded. (Mo0).
- God delivered us from every power that would try to claim title to our lives, to win possession of us, or generally to bring harm to us. (NIV).
- He wants us to see that though they still exists, they are defeated (the enemies)

Col. 2:16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, ¹⁷ which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. ¹⁸ Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in *false* humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, ¹⁹ and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase *that is* from God.

- The term meaning “rob you of your prize” is employed when one person is victorious, but the prize of victory is given to another, when though a victor, you are robbed of the victor’s prize – Chrysostem
- Do not let anyone impose upon you a program of spiritual development that does not have Christ at is head (Moo).
- Paul does not reject these practices outright as idolatry but insists they are only a shadow of what is to come

- The warning included two areas: Diet and Days
- **Legalism is intrinsically joyless.**
 - It spawns judgmentalism. Judgmentalism is miserable for the judged, and the judging because it shrivels their souls.
 - Legalism produces a surface faith (Hughes).
- The problem is that we can worship the rules or our theological constructions more than we worship Christ (NIV).
- Having rules in the head is no substitute for obedience from the heart (NIV).

Illustrations

- This is why he did not erase it (our debt) but tore it to pieces – Chrysostom
- Sin being overcome is said to be put to death; the cross is not the death of the Savior, but of sin. Ambrosiaster

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

- Our problem with the law as humans as is our refusal to trade on a curve. Performing at 99.99% still earns us an F minus and a death sentence for our failure. (NIV)

Krakow Poland

- From the great steeple of St Mary's church a bugle has been sounded every day for the last 700 years. The last note on the bugle is always muted and broken, as if some disaster had befallen the bugler. This 700 year old commemoration is a memory of a heroic trumpeter who one night summoned the people to defend their city against the invading tartars. As he was sounding the blast on the last trumpet an arrow from one of the Tartars struck and killed him. So there is always a muffled note at the end The Kraovians have never forgotten this heroic warning. In the same way Paul warns the church of deadly arrows (Hughes).

Secret Rearmament Hitler and the NAZIs planned from the beginning for a massive rearmament program. NAZI propoganda promoted the idea that Germany must rearm. [Riegler] The NAZI objectives could in fact only be achieved by war. The NAZIs did not, however, begin a massive rearmament program immediately upon seizing power in 1933. Hitler's first objective was to secure control of Germany abd he did not want to precipitate foreign intervention before he was ready. The German military itself has already sponsored secret armanents programs during the Weimar era in violation of the Versailles Treaty. The NAZIs thus had a solid foundation upon which to base a revived military. The NAZIs sharply expand weapon reseearch. The German military expanded in secret during 1933-34. Hitler by March 1935, felt suffucently secure to publicize his military. The NAZIs announced that they expansion - which broke the terms of the Versailles Treaty. Europe learned that the Nazis had a modern 2,500 plane Luftwaffe and a Wehrmacht with 300,000 men. Hitler publicly announced that he was insituting a compulsory military conscription and planned to expand the Wehrmacht to 550,000 men. Actual araments production began in earnest in 1936. The NAZIs in 1936 doubled armamets spending over 1935 levels. It was in 1936 that NAZI arms spending first exceeeded the combined total for transportation and construction spending. The nature of arms spending also increased. NAZI arms spending initially focused on research, development, and capital investment. The NAZIs in 1936 began concentrating on producing actual military equipment. This is one of the least economically beneficial types of government spending.

Application