

“Breaking Free”

Colossians 2 v11-15

Scripture Ref: Is 29:13; Deut 30:6; John 10:27-28; Rom 8:37

(READ V9-23)

- 1. Vs 11-15 is an incredible declarative statement... but why would Paul break out into this doxology of truth?**
 - a. Was is just a spontaneous outburst of doctrine... or did Paul have a point to make?**
 - b. I believe that what Paul is stating here has a huge bearing on the topic we are leading into...**
 - c. “Does following rules and laws make you more spiritual? More mature?”**
- 2. In verse 16 Paul states... “So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths...”**
 - a. That word “so” is a connection to verses 11-15, IOW “what I just declared to you is true, so don’t fall for the trap of legalism...”**
- 3. Today Paul will give us four key points, truths that can break us free from the effects of legalism...**
 - a. We are Circumcised in Christ**
 - b. We are Alive in Christ**
 - c. We are Freed from the law in Christ**
 - d. We are Victorious in Christ**

#1 Circumcised in Christ

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,

- 4. Today circumcision is a medical decision parents make at the birth of a boy... “to cut, or not to cut”**
 - a. But in Jewish culture, circumcision was immensely important. It literally defined whether you were a Jew, it was a requirement before you could worship in the synagogue.**
- 5. Circumcision was a sign of God’s covenant with the Jewish people,**
 - a. But in reality it was a physical procedure that could NEVER accomplish what God wanted to accomplish in the lives of the Jewish people**
 - b. It was a symbolic ritual given to show**
 - i. #1 – That the people were identified with God of Abraham**
 - ii. #2 - That the people were included in the nation of God’s chosen people**
 - c. But what about the NT Christian?**

6. Some of the Jewish leaders in the early church tried to impose this requirement on the gentiles
 - a. and in Acts 15 we are given the summary where the Apostles and elders said *“no, we are not going to put this burden on the Gentiles”*
 - b. (a really big WHEW was heard throughout the church!)
7. Why does Paul use this illustration?
 - a. To help us see that the problem with a procedure or a ritual is that it is an external act – it’s only symbolic
 - b. In and of itself it cannot accomplish a spiritual purpose...
 - c. God gave the ritual to the Israelites, but He still looked to their hearts to see where they stood with HIM

Isa 29:13 "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths And honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from Me,

- d. IOW – God saw the external, but when He looked in their hearts – “What’s this???”

8. The work God wanted to do then – and now – is in the HEART

Deut 30:6 And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

9. Here is the POINT - Just as circumcision was a sign of identification and inclusion,
 - a. When we enter into salvation, we are *“circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, ... by the circumcision of Christ”*
 - b. IOW - we are now identified with Christ, we are now included in His work, His identity
10. And there is a corresponding thing that happens – which NO ritual could ever accomplish....
 - a. We have now *“put off the body of the sins of the flesh”*
 - b. In circumcision a part of the flesh is cut off, and discarded...
 - c. An illustration of how our sin nature was put off – rendered inoperable – we are no longer slaves of it’s desires
 - d. How did God do it?? He fixed our HEART
 - e. Man goes into a hospital for heart bypass, and instead gets circumcised. Dr says “well, it will help”. No it won’t!
11. We need to see things are they are – no ritual will ever bring us closer to God!

#2 Alive in Christ

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,

12. Here Paul uses the illustration of baptism

- a. **There are churches who believe if you are baptized as a baby, then you are saved**
- b. **But like circumcision, water baptism is only an outward illustration of an inner spiritual reality. (buried – risen)**
- c. **And just like circumcision to the Jew, for the Christian baptism is**
 - i. **an act by which we are identified with Christ,**
 - ii. **and it is sign that we are included into a spiritual reality**
- d. **The ritual is external and physical, yet it is done to indicate a spiritual reality that has occurred...**
 - i. **When Christ died – WE died with Him**
 - ii. **When Christ was buried – WE were buried with Him**
 - iii. **When Christ arose – WE arose with Him**

13. IOW – what we talked about last week at Easter – we no longer possess only physical life – but we have now been endowed with ETERNAL SPIRITUAL LIFE in Christ

John 10:27-28

27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

- a. **We have been given true life – and we have been transformed...**

14. And what was the transformation? Forgiveness!

- a. ***We were “dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of (our) flesh, (and) He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven (us) all trespasses.”***

15. IOW the point in all of this is not “were you circumcised” or even “have you been baptized”, but **HAVE YOU BEEN FORGIVEN? ARE YOU ALIVE in Christ??**

- a. **Because if you have been forgiven then you are...**

#3 Freed from the Law in 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.

16. Here is where we really need to start getting a grip on the reality of our salvation...

- a. Jesus not only took our sins and nailed them to the cross, He took the Law to the cross and nailed it there as well!
- b. In the Greek is the idea of wiping away – like a whiteboard
- c. This is where well-meaning Christians and those new in the faith can get mixed up...
- d. They struggle with this question: Where do I stand in relation to the law?

17. (For a complete answer to this question, please read the Epistle to the Romans...)

18. Short version...

- a. The law is good and holy – given by God
- b. But the law cannot save us from sin, or condemnation
- c. Attempting to obey the law to be deemed righteous by God is futile, because none of us can keep it – we all fall short
- d. What the law DOES is it shows us – that we fall short – we are unable in our current state to keep the law to God's standard.
- e. The law clearly states "I AM GUILTY"
- f. The law shows us that we need another way – a better way – and that way is JESUS CHRIST
- g. When Jesus died on the cross, He paid our debt to the law – He took the charge that was against us and nailed it to the cross as a debt fully paid.

19. SIDENOTE – this is where legalism can creep in - in that we SAY that our sins are forgiven – BUT WE DON'T REALLY BELIEVE IT

- a. IOW – we carry around the guilt of our past sins like sandspurs we picked up walking through a field – the more we get, the more they irritate us.
- b. We sin and we feel like God is no longer happy with us because we - good Christians – SINNED
- c. "How could I do that!?? I must not really love God!!! God certainly cannot be happy with me right now..."
- d. And after a while we don't even confess to God anymore, because we feel ashamed to ask Him – for the 1000th time – to forgive us.
- e. And we become trapped in a prison cell of doubt and confusion..

20. Let me ask you a pointed question (don't raise your hand!) – have you sinned lately?

- a. Do you feel guilty about it?
- b. And you know – sometimes we'll feel so bad, we think "man I am such a failure as a Christian, what's the point in trying..."

- c. When those thoughts of condemnation come – they are NOT from God.
- d. Those thoughts are from the enemy, who wants to deceive you and convince you that
 - i. God is unhappy,
 - ii. and that you are a loser,
 - iii. and you might as well just keep on sinning...
- e. The source of a lot of depression and anxiety among Christians

21. But listen to what Paul is telling us...

- a. *“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.”*
- b. IOW – Jesus paid the debt for our sin, and then He took the law, which condemns us, and He wiped it away,
- c. Which means that the law can no longer accuse us – we have been freed from its accusation.
- d. Listen – WE NEED TO GET THIS... - it is not optional – YOU ARE FORGIVEN – and the law no longer condemns you!

22. As if someone sued you for \$1M. Goes to court – you are found guilty – but your rich Father comes in and pays the settlement.

- a. The debt is settled. The plaintiff who brought the suit can go on complaining and accusing, but they have no legal standing to get one more penny from you.
- b. Listen – your debt is paid – but the plaintiff is still accusing.
- c. Satan, our adversary skulks around accusing and pointing out our sins... but why listen? It's old news!

23. Because we are ...

#4 Victorious in Christ

15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

24. Again there is an illustration that Paul is playing off of here...

- a. In Roman times when the Roman army would defeat an enemy, the conquering General would take the spoils of war and captives from the defeated foe.
- b. He would enter back into Rome in a huge parade – his army parading all of the loot that was taken...
- c. And the defeated king or general and his leadership (at least those who survived) would be stripped naked, tied together, and paraded through the center of town

- d. **Everyone would see – they would look down at these once-mighty men, stripped of their weapons and armor, who are now shamed and defeated**

25. This is a picture of what happened to Satan and his demonic army at the cross.

- a. **I would be willing to bet that as Jesus was being handed over, sentenced, beaten, ridiculed, and nailed to the cross...**
- b. **Satan and his generals were probably dancing with glee – taunting and blaspheming**
- c. **Sure that they had taken down God’s plan and killed His perfect little son...**
- d. **And yet in reality... Satan was being defeated, disarmed... literally snatching defeat from the jaws of victory!**

26. That is the picture we HAVE to understand – Jesus defeated Satan at the cross — utterly and completely –

- a. **And because Christ defeated Satan, and we FREE!**
- b. **We share in His victory**

Rom 8:37 we are more than conquerors through Him

27. And because of that fact, there is NO place for legalism in our lives:

- a. **Some of you may still feel burdened with the rituals and procedures of church life – Your Free!**
- b. **Some of you may not be sure that you are forgiven – Your Free!**
- c. **Some of you are struggling with accusations from the enemy – Your Free!**
- d. **Some here – need Christ...**

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