

Baptism's Profound Significance for Christians: Colossians 2:8-15

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Colossians 2:8-15 ESV

⁸ See 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. ⁹ For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰ and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. ¹¹ In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, ¹² having 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. ¹³ And 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, ¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Introduction and Background

- we sometimes forget just how serious baptism should be for Christians
- hear this story about a girl who became a Christian and experienced what it means to carry your cross and follow Jesus

There was a pastor from North America who went on a mission trip to Asia. While he was there, he attended a small church. At one of the church's worship services, a teenage girl came forward to announce her decision to follow Christ and be baptized.

During the service, the North American pastor noticed some worn-out luggage leaning against the wall of the church building. He asked the pastor of the church about this luggage that was in the church. The pastor pointed to the girl who had just been baptized and told him, "Her father said that if she was baptized as a Christian she could never go home again. So she brought her luggage."

- because Canada is somewhat tolerant of Christianity, and as a society we are somewhat tolerant of different ideas, we can forget that many people across the globe do not experience this kind of tolerance for their faith in Jesus Christ

- but what is remarkable about this story is that this young lady was willing to suffer for Jesus Christ even though she knew that her family would disown her

- when I first heard this story of the teenage girl being kicked out of her house because she wanted to follow Christ I thought of Jesus' teachings on discipleship

Luke 14:26 "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple."

- Jesus is speaking in hyperbole, to teach His followers the importance of following Him (Jesus) first

- this brings up a good question, if you were going to lose your family and your housing if you got baptized, would you still get baptized?

- I hope you all would say, "I have decided to follow Jesus, the cross before me the world behind me"

- we are looking at the book of Colossians today because in chapter 2:8-15 Paul speaks about baptism

- Paul wrote the book of Colossians, to the church that was found in modern-day Turkey, because the Colossian church had started to deny the importance of Jesus

- Paul writes this letter to remind them of the supremacy of Jesus Christ

- if you wanted to summarize the book of Colossians it would be quite simple: "Jesus is supreme"

- a song written by Graham Kendrick can also help us understand the book of Colossians, "Jesus is my all, He's the best, He's my joy and righteousness"

1) (2:8) Deceptive Teaching

2) (2:9-10) Divinity of Jesus

3) (2:11-15) Dead and Made Alive

1) (2:8) Deceptive Teaching

(2:8) See 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.

- Paul starts this section with a warning to avoid being taken captive

a) be alert and aware

- the word "see" can also be translated as "be alert" or "be careful"

- it has this idea of being careful or mindful of your surroundings

- Christians are called to be aware of what is going on in the world and, of course, what is going on in the church

- there are all sorts of philosophies and deceptive ideas that are floating all around

- these ideas are not according to Jesus Christ and the Word of God but they are according to human ideas and even "elementary spirits" (demonic powers)

b) grow in your knowledge by reading scripture

- Christians, let us make sure that we are always aware of Jesus Christ and His Word

- one way to be alert is to always be in the Word of God

- because when you are in the Word of God, you are reading the gospel of Jesus Christ and you are reminded of the truths about God and thus you will avoid the land minds of false teaching

- when you are in the God's word, God is teaching by the Holy Spirit, but when you not daily in God's word, you are allowing the sinful world to infiltrate you

2) (2:9-10) Divinity of Jesus

(2:9-10) 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.

- Paul reminds the Colossians of two important truths about Jesus Christ

a) the divinity of Jesus Christ and b) the authority of Jesus Christ

a) the divinity of Jesus Christ

- this means that Jesus is God

- if the fullness of deity dwells in Jesus bodily, then Jesus is fully God

- Paul has already talked about this in the great hymn of Jesus found in Colossians 1:15-20

Colossians 1:19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,

- although many people try and muddy the waters about Jesus Christ, the Bible clearly says that Jesus is God

b) the authority of Jesus Christ

- Jesus is described here as “the head of all rule and authority”

- this means that Jesus has authority over all things

- Jesus rules, and is over, the demonic powers

- Jesus rules, and reigns over, the nations and all political leaders

- Jesus even rules and reigns over all municipalities

- and, of course, because Jesus is the head, He is also the head of the church which means that Jesus is the boss of the church

- when a church disregards Jesus Christ, His word, and His authority and ventures into deceptive human philosophies, that is when that church gets into serious trouble

- but we know that the Colossian church was teaching something else that was destructive
- they were teaching that fullness of life comes from other things and not from Jesus Christ

- Paul writes “you have been filled in him” (2:10)

- we sometimes forget that fullness of life, or full satisfaction, comes from Jesus Christ

- no lasting satisfaction comes from sin and rebellion against God, these only lead to sorrow

- but knowing Jesus, and living for Him, leads to the filling with the fullness of life

3) (2:11-15) Dead and Made Alive

- in Colossians 2:11-15, Paul uses the idea of circumcision and baptism to speak about the work of Jesus Christ upon the cross and His wonderful grace

a) circumcision

(2:11) In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,

- Paul brings up the topic of circumcision which is an Old Testament sign that people belonged to the Lord

- but now there is a new circumcision that is not done by hands because it is accomplished by Jesus Christ

- when Jesus saves you, you are circumcised in your heart

- this means that you no longer are in bondage to sin and are no longer a slave to sin

- Jesus Christ peels away that reigning power of sin in your life

- you are given the Holy Spirit, and He empowers you to live a holy life

- Jesus makes people new and gives them new life and they no longer have to live for sin again, they are given new hearts so that they can live for Jesus Christ

b) baptism

(2:12) having 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.

- Paul now talks about what baptism symbolizes in the life of the believer

- in the act of baptism, you are put under water to show that indeed you died to the authority of sin in your life
- then you are raised out of the water to show that you are alive in Jesus Christ
- note that this new life happens not because you are baptized, but this work of grace begins when a person has faith in Jesus Christ

c) complete forgiveness

(2:13-15) ¹³ And 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, ¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

i) Jesus' work is all sufficient

- in Colossians 2:13-15, Paul reminds the Colossian church of the sufficiency of the work of Jesus upon the cross
- in Colossians 2:13, we are reminded of why we need and Jesus Christ and His work upon the cross

ii) Jesus is able to forgive all our sin

- because all humans are dead in sin
- from the beginning God had declared that disobedience, which is rebellion, would bring death

Genesis 2:16 ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

- death came into the world because humanity rebelled against God
- but God makes His people alive and He does this by forgiving all their sin

- God is a holy and just God who punishes sin, but He is able to forgive sin because Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sin
- note that this is a complete forgiveness – all your sins are forgiven

iii) Jesus is able to erase all our sin

- in Colossians 2:14, Paul describes how all of our sins can be forgiven
- the record of our sin has been wiped out
- just imagine all of your sins are recorded on a piece of paper with permanent marker
- these sins are terrible, now imagine that this list of sins is erased and your sin record is absolutely gone
- you can no longer be proven guilty for your sin
- this is what Jesus has done on the cross for those who trust in His work and turn from their sin

Acts 3:19 Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, ²⁰ that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus,

Application

1) Baptism Reminds Us of Our New Life in Christ

- the act of baptism reminds us of the work of Jesus Christ in the life of a person
- Paul declares that all humans are dead in sin (2:13)
- this means that each human, apart from the grace of Jesus Christ, is committed to sin
- sin is all they know and live for
- the person outside of Jesus Christ knows nothing but the life of sin and rebellion against God
- but God in His grace sends His son and Jesus goes to the cross so that new life and

forgiveness of sins can be given to those who receive the grace of Jesus

- Baptism reminds Christians of two important truths:

1) as we go under the water this symbolizes we were dead in sin,
2) as we are brought up out of the water this symbolizes the new life that Jesus gives freely to those who trust in Him

- because of Christ, we have new life and this is in contrast to being dead in sin and thus under the judgment of God for our sin

- for anyone who is outside of Jesus Christ, there is only death and judgment but by His grace, and His work, you can have forgiveness of sins too

- hear Paul and what he says about this new life in Christ in Ephesians

Ephesians 2:1-5 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience-- ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ-- by grace you have been saved--

2) Baptism Reminds us of the Amazing Benefits of Knowing Christ

i) fullness of life

- when you look at baptism you are reminded of all the amazing blessings that Christian can experience

- for instance, by knowing Jesus , He offers fullness of life (2:10)

- this means that Jesus gives ultimate satisfaction and joy

ii) no longer ruled by sin

- we were ruled by sin, but we died to sin, so that sin is no longer our master and our ruler (2:11)

- we have a new Lord and Master and that is Jesus Christ

- by the work of Christ we no longer are ruled by sin but can live by the power of the Holy Spirit

iii) no longer have a sin record

- sin brought death to us, but through Jesus Christ we are raised to new life (2:12)

- the washing of water in the act of baptism reminds us that all of our sins are washed away (2:13)

- because of the work of Christ the record of sin that was against us has been deleted

- I sometimes wish I could hit that delete button in people's minds because of the things I have done, so that they would not remember them anymore

- but praise the Lord, our record of sin has been erased so the Lord will remember our sins and lawless deeds no more

- Jeremiah spoke about the time of Jesus Christ, and what He would usher in, for those who follow the Lord

Jeremiah 31:34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

iv) a baptism brings joy

- when you are a Christian, and you observe a baptism or are being baptized, you can be

reminded of all the amazing blessings of knowing Jesus Christ

- it is a joy to know that all your sins are forgiven
- it is a joy to know that the record of your sin is wiped away

3) Repent, Believe and be Baptized

i) always rebelling – repent

- Solomon in his wisdom says this about every human in the book of Ecclesiastes

Ecclesiastes 7:29 See, this alone I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes.

- this is what we all have done, we have sought out evil schemes and gone our own way in opposition to the Lord

ii) able to turn from sin – believe

- but praise the Lord for Jesus Christ and His gracious work

- if you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ, today is the day to humble yourself before the Lord, turn from your sin and trust the person and work of Jesus Christ

- you have just heard about all the amazing blessings that Jesus offers, they can be yours if you trust in Jesus Christ alone

iii) obey his command – be baptized

- also, if you are a Christian and are not baptized, today is the day to make the decision to follow Jesus in the waters of baptism

- remember that being a follower of Jesus Christ means that you get baptized and obey the Lord

Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

- Jesus Christ gives new life to a dead person and baptism symbolizes this new life
- Praise the Lord

Colossians 2:8

See 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.

