

Complete in Christ (Colossians 2:9-15)

Paul wrote to the Colossians to warn them, and to warn us, about deceivers who would distract us from the pure truth of the Gospel.

Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. (Colossians 2:8)

You have an enemy, and the devil has been a liar and a deceiver from the very beginning. He will do his level best to twist the word of God to his own advantage. While he cannot snatch any of God's children out of Christ's hands, he can rob them of the peace and joy we have available in Jesus. He wants to replace your peace with an attitude of fear. He wants to replace your joy with an unreasonable anger. I see Christians falling victim to his deceit every day so we need to beware.

Now the second chapter of Colossians falls neatly into three different sections, each flowing logically from the previous. The first ten verses focus on who Jesus is. Jesus is 100% God, and Jesus is 100% man.

Verses 11 through 15 focus on what Jesus has accomplished. We're going to focus on these verses this morning, although I'm going to start with verse 9 to make sure you understand the importance Jesus' deity. Jesus could not have accomplished what He did if He were not God and by the way, He could not have accomplished what He did if He were not a human being. God cannot die, so Jesus had to become human to pay the death penalty for our sins.

The final section of Colossians 2, verses 16-23 deals with the implications of Christ's work for us. We'll look into that next week, Lord willing, but in the meantime, I'd like you to read all of Colossians 2 this week. In fact, read it several times. It would be good if you read it at least once every day. Doing so will help you really internalize the big picture.

But today, we're going to focus on the middle section. I hope the Lord will show you that Jesus has already done everything necessary to secure both your salvation and your sanctification. You are complete in Him. You are complete in Christ.

For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. 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, 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. 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, 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. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. (Colossians 2:9-15)

One good way to unpack this passage is to notice six critical prepositional phrases. It might be good to underline each of them, or highlight them. In doing so, it will focus your attention on the most important points.

Starting with verse 9, we see “In Him”. Verse 10: “In Him”, Verse 11: “In Him”, Verse 12: “With Him” twice. Verse 13: “With Him” Each of these refers back to the antecedent found in verse 8, which is Christ. So we can paraphrase these main points like this: **In Christ** dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. You are complete **in Christ**. **In Christ**, you were circumcised. **With Christ**, you were buried in baptism. **With Christ**, you were raised from the dead. Together **with Christ**, you were made alive. That’s what Jesus has done for you. Let’s take a closer look at each of these now.

*For **in Him** dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; (Colossians 2:9)*

We looked at this last week, but it is so foundational. To enjoy all the blessings of Christianity, we must have a solid Christology. Jesus is the God-man, fully God and fully man. Most heresies, most Christian cults attack one or the other of these truths.

As I mentioned before, Jesus had to be 100% man so He could experience all the temptations we experience. Yet He lived a perfect human life without sin and He had to be 100% human in order to die on the cross. God is eternal and He cannot die. But Jesus allowed His human nature to be sacrificed on Golgotha to pay for our sins.

But make no mistake, Jesus is also 100% God.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)

The Bible is crystal-clear about Jesus’ deity. He is not “a god”. He is not a little less God than the Father. He is not called God as an honorary title. He is not a man who became God. He is the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. There never was a time when He was not God. And as recorded in the book of John, Jesus Himself made that claim about Himself numerous times.

Remember back in Exodus, when Moses asked God what His name was?

And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' " (Exodus 3:14)

It’s the Tetragrammaton. We don’t know for sure how to pronounce it because the children of Israel considered it too holy to pronounce it out loud. It might be Ya-ho-vah, it might be Yahweh It might be Jehovah. We translate it into English as “I AM”.

Well, here’s what Jesus says about Himself: *I am the bread of life. (John 6:48) I am the light of the world. (John 8:12) I am the door. (John 10:9) I am the good shepherd. (John 10:11) I am the resurrection and the life. (John 11:25) I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. (John 14:6) And astoundingly: Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM. (John 8:58)*

The Jewish leadership certainly understood what Jesus was saying. They picked up rocks to stone Him to death. They knew He was claiming to be 100% God, and if it hadn’t been true, He would have been guilty of the most heinous blasphemy. But it is true.

Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? (John 14:8-9)

Jesus is fully God, and if He wasn’t, He could not have done what He did. What did He do for us? Everything! He makes us complete.

and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. (Colossians 2:10)

If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, He is all you need. You are complete. You need nothing more. Because He is the head of all principality and power. All means all, folks. There is nothing that stands outside of Jesus' authority. Nothing in heaven and nothing on Earth.

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. (Matthew 28:18)

When Jesus wants to do something, He doesn't have to check with anyone else – He has the authority. Of course, His will is perfectly aligned with the Father's will. And the will of the Holy Spirit is perfectly aligned with the Father's will and the Son's will. There is never any disagreement within the Godhead.

In His High-Priestly prayer offered the very night He was betrayed, Jesus said:

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. (John 17:20-21)

Do you think there is any chance that the Father would fail to answer the prayer of His one and only Son? Of course not. If you trust in Jesus, you are complete in Him and He is everything you need.

If you have trusted Jesus, He has separated you from your sin. That's really what is in view when Paul says in verse 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, (Colossians 2:11)

Circumcision is a surgical procedure. It involves cutting ... the removal of flesh. But this is not a physical circumcision. It is a spiritual circumcision. Jesus surgically removes you from the body of your sins. He separates you from your sins.

You realize the terrible fact that you're a sinner, don't you? I hope so, because I try to tell you every week. If you don't know, you haven't been listening! We all sin. And despite what some preachers try to say, you continue to sin even after you come to saving faith in Christ.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (1 John 1:8)

But by dying on the cross, Jesus has separated us from our sins.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

We sometimes use the figure of a robe of righteousness. It's a good metaphor, but I'm not sure it goes quite far enough. It's more like we are encased in a suit of righteousness from head to toe. It's sort of a spiritual Spandex fashioned from the blood of the Savior and we put it on by faith. So when God looks at us, He sees Christ's righteousness rather than the sin of our flesh.

The sin of our flesh is cut off ... circumcised. In Christ we are declared positionally righteous and one day, in Christ, we will be righteous through and through. He's going to see to it at our physical resurrection.

Not only are we separated from something ... that is, our sin, We are also joined to something and that is what baptism is all about.

Paul says we are ...

... buried with Him in baptism, (Colossians 2:12)

Now, this is not about getting wet. This is not about the ordinance of baptism. Just as the circumcision in the previous verse is a spiritual circumcision, this is a spiritual baptism.

when we head down to Quarter Circle Bridge to have one of our baptism services, the physical act of baptizing someone doesn't actually transmit the grace of God. That physical baptism is simply a public declaration of a transaction that has already taken place. The moment you place your faith in Jesus Christ for your salvation, you are buried with Him in baptism.

The Apostle Peter explains this well:

*There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (**not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God**), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him. (1 Peter 3:21-22)*

It is not the ordinance of baptism that saves us. It is our identification with Jesus Christ that saves us.

In Christ, we are buried with Him. By His death, we also die to the sins of our flesh. And by this spiritual baptism ...

... you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. (Colossians 2:12)

By this Spiritual baptism, you are forever identified with Jesus Christ in His death, burial and resurrection and it takes place at the moment of conversion.

So, should you submit to water baptism?

Yes! Absolutely, but not as a means of obtaining salvation. Water baptism is a public testimony of a transaction that has already taken place and we should want to testify to our faith in Christ. We should want to let the Church and the world know that we have been buried and raised with Christ.

By this spiritual baptism, you are ushered into the kingdom of God. And the really cool thing about it is that you have been resurrected to a brand new life.

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, (Colossians 2:13)

You sin because you are a sinner ... that is your fleshly nature. And your sin separated you from God:

... your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear. (Isaiah 59:2)

But while you were still a sinner, Christ died for you. And when you accept that free gift, He makes you alive, together with Him. As Paul wrote to the Galatians:

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

That new life is available to everyone who can believe in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

For "WHOEVER CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED." (Romans 10:13)

... if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. (Romans 10:9)

Jesus has secured our forgiveness ...

... 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. (Colossians 2:14)

There is an eternal record of every sin you have ever committed. We read about it in Revelation where it talks about the Great White Throne judgment:

And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. (Revelation 20:12)

Jesus has wiped out the handwriting of requirements found in those books and He has recorded our names instead in the Book of Life.

And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:15)

Is your name written in the Book of Life? I so pray that it is! Satan has already been defeated. His destiny is absolutely assured. He is on his way to hell. Satan wants desperately to take you to hell with him. But if you have placed your trust in Jesus, He will not let Satan have his way because Jesus has ...

... disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. (Colossians 2:15)

Trust Jesus. He is all you need. You are absolutely complete in Christ!