

Sins forgiven

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[0 : 00] With me to the second chapter in Paul's letter to the Colossians, and we may again read from verse 13 to the end of verse 15.

Colossians chapter 2, reading from verse 13 to the end of verse 15. And you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.

Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.

And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. In this letter, Paul, inspired by the Spirit, addresses himself to problems that had arisen within the congregation at Colossae.

And one of the problems was the desire on the part of some to move away from the simplicity of the gospel.

[1 : 41] And they wished to introduce novelties of various descriptions. Now we don't exactly know what the heresy at Colossae was.

There is no express reference as to what was happening. We can only infer from what Paul's references are.

That there were aspects of Christian truth, which Paul felt required to be emphasized as an antidote to what was happening in the congregation there.

Basically, the heresy was Jewish. There was the desire for legal ordinances, for circumcision, food regulations, the keeping of holy days, and certain aspects of the Sabbath, and occasions when there were other feasts as at New Moon.

There is some reference to angelic worship and adoration. In it all, we have a gathering together of many shades of opinion, deciding to mix all this up in our Christian practice, which was anathema to what was spoken and written in the Scriptures.

[3 : 43] Now, Paul's answer to the heresy was to put against the unscriptural tradition, what was scripture, the true doctrine of Christ.

And my dear friends, where the word fails to correct any leanings or moving away from what is acceptable in the Scriptures, you may be sure that you and I will fail.

We are very, very foolish if at any time we think that we can overcome the passions of the human heart through personal application of our understanding of life.

The Apostle Paul was an exceptional man in so many different ways. He himself made no boast about it.

But very clearly, any man who had the ability and the capacity to benefit from one of the greatest teachers of his day, Gamaliel, he obviously had an acuteness of mind himself.

[5 : 19] But Paul never turned to philosophical arguments. He didn't turn to any other arguments. But he applied himself as God enabled him to understand the Scripture, to apply it, and to leave it there.

Now Paul says that Christ is the very image of God. And what he means by that is that Christ is the embodiment, the one who expresses bodily the fullness of the divine essence.

Now we use that word essence for want of something that we can adapt to describe what we cannot describe.

What is God? God is a spirit. God is a spirit.

Paul also says that in what Christ has done, that no other agency had any part by way of helping or bringing to pass what Christ achieved.

[7 : 26] To use the words of the prophet Isaiah he trod the winepress alone. And we know very well in the garden of Gethsemane when the blood sweat was pouring from him that the anguish into which he entered was an anguish that isolated him Peter, James, John could not in any way comfort him in that situation he entered into something again which you and I cannot understand we make reference to it when we speak of the forsaking of God we speak about something that we cannot expound.

Now there are two things that we might look at just for a little while first of all the triumph of Christ and then the elements in that triumph but first of all the triumph of Christ now the triumph of Christ although it featured in a country such as Palestine of that day the death took place at a place called Calvary nevertheless its triumph its effects the benefits of his death applied to all the world of the universe and Paul brings out that very clearly in his letter to the Romans in the 8th chapter where he speaks about the whole creation waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God and very clearly in that context he is not talking about human beings and he is not talking about angels but he is talking about the creation in a way that we cannot in any way anticipate how this great restoration is going to take place but the scripture does say that the whole creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God and not because the triumph of Christ was a cosmic triumph it was something that applied to the whole world there are many differences of opinions in some aspects of what Christ has done but let us remind ourselves that the efficacy of what Christ achieved does not depend on our explanation or on our understanding just as you have it through the Old Testament and right into the New you find that the counsel of God stands stands and there is no

Jebidi with respect to the emphasis of scripture and the more that you reflect upon this aspect of the revelation of God the more hope you receive with respect to what lies ahead of us God help us if it was in the hands of denominations God help us if it was in the hands of ministers or of elders or of members God help us if it was in the hands of governments and we depended on our politicians it doesn't depend upon any of these parts of humanity it is something that rests four square upon him upon whose shoulders the government lies now when we speak of the triumph of Christ in terms of what

Paul was writing to the church at Colossae he speaks with a joyful confidence there is no defeatism there and there ought never to be I know how personally believers feel the psalmist says my flesh and heart doth faint and fail and if you have known of people with heart trouble when there is a failing one is told that it can be agonizing the psalmist was aware personally from the aspect of the indwelling of sin in his own life the conflict that raged and reduced him to a sense of increasing weakness but the psalmist goes on to say my heart and flesh doth faint and fail but God doth fail me never we sometimes look around us in so many different ways and we are like Peter when he looked at the waves we forget that Christ is walking on the waves of Galilee and we are to cry but Christ did not sink or begin to sink as he walked the waves of Galilee and he is still controlling the affairs of the universe the story is told of an incident

I think it was in the first world war and there was a heavy engagement with the enemy and this chaplain was recording afterwards his own experience of it and when the gunfire was at its loudest and shells bursting all around him tremendous aggression of every description he said the most reassuring thing that he found in that situation was the message that was telegraphed back to headquarters and the message was everything is under control the fighting was fierce there was death on every side but the those involved in directing a opposition to meet the enemy's onslaught were telegraphing back to headquarters everything is under control and my dear friends there is no question about it everything is under control now it's a strange thing when you look at the death of Christ that only a believer could come to the conclusion that

[16 : 28] Calvary presents the triumph of the most wonderful description a non-Christian would find it very difficult to understand he sees Christ rejected by his own nation he sees him betrayed by one of his own disciples Judas he sees him denied and deserted when the situation was at its most threatening he sees him denied and deserted by his disciples he sees him put to death by the authority of the Roman procurator he sees him hanging on a cross limp he sees him deprived of all freedom it appears as if the whole situation is a total defeat if there is a victory it would seem to be the victory of pride prejudice jealousy venom brutality everything that is meanest in the human makeup seems to flower and under that great onslaught we see the

Christ of God mockingly referred to he saved others himself he cannot claim so often the symbol of the Christian is the symbol of the cross a very very strange symbol but yet esto no one can deny the tremendous turn about in the attitudes of the followers of Jesus after his resurrection they were lion hearted men and women they were proud to stand under the banner of King Jesus and they considered it the highest honour when they suffered because of those who were determined to blot out the memory of Jesus from off the face of the earth now the Christian sees things not as it appears but as it really is but it requires the insight that only the Holy Spirit can give now as a generation we have advanced technically we have opportunities of educating ourselves that our fathers didn't have and from time to time we have presented to us through the media some of the recognised world experts and they have all the opportunity that their position affords them to present as they see it the things of life and of course they sit in judgement upon Jesus man is incorrigibly arrogant and there is an arrogance in us all a horrible arrogance and somehow we think because we have a little understanding that our understanding that our understanding can enable us to sit in judgement upon the mystery of our being and particularly the greatness of our creator and our saviour and so you have it at this present time this film that is creating such a sensation on the other side of the Atlantic and causing ripples in our country and we see the audacity of presenting a Jesus that is foreign to us in the only source book that we have of the son of God but let us remember that intelligence of itself does not make a Christian and you and I

can sit down with some of the most gifted writers and stand on their shoulders reading into these things that except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of heaven and that doesn't mean just a death that he will enter into glory it means that he cannot see except he receive the spiritual insight the reality of what is declared for us in the scriptures well then to move away from that aspect we see in this triumph here and it's a triumph that extends to the whole world we see the conquest of evil now the Bible tells us that this would take place the seed of the woman

Genesis 3 15 shall bruise the head of the serpent the seed of the woman and very clearly that is interpreted by the scriptures itself as referring to Messiah the ultimate crushing of Satan is something that is quite definitely declared down through the scriptures and it is very interesting as you go over the lives that God was pleased to honor in the greatest way their considerable weakness and lack of insight into the great conflicts upon which hinged the progress the march forward of the purpose and the counsel of God you have only to think of the birth of our Lord to realize in that situation how

Mary received the message but she didn't broadcast it she tucked it away in her thoughts she reflected upon it she didn't even discuss it with Joseph to whom she was espoused and Joseph himself was so suspicious of Mary whom he loved a woman of obvious purity that he was prepared to separate his relationship with her now we can see in this great conquest of Christ our blessed Lord the abortive assaults the attacks of Satan when we think of Herod's murder of the children of

[25 : 40] Bethlehem and you would wonder in that situation how the infant Jesus would escape how did he escape God spoke to Joseph in a dream a dream what do you think of a dream probably you have them by the score every night or some night and if I or anybody else began telling you with great solemnity about our dreams and interpreting and applying them you would begin to think there is a little simplicity about that person we are not going to attach great importance to our dream but

God used the dream the most common way of communication there was no doubt in Joseph's mind he recognized in the dream the authority of the one who in whom authority reside and we see Joseph taking the unusual step of moving with the child Jesus the attempt of Herod strong and powerful and absolutely merciless as he was was aborted we see in the wilderness temptations Christ is tempted to bypass the cross to avoid the crown of thorns and all that was involved in the suffering there but we see how in that situation our

Lord applies scripture one after the other and we see how strengthless Satan was as he tempted our Lord we see the popular attempt by the people to make Jesus king they wanted to make him king they recognized in him what was exceptional Jesus wouldn't have it we see the contradiction of Peter of the necessity of the cross we see demons exposed and cast out we see the betrayal of Judas and if anybody knew Christ well Judas did if you want to know a man or a woman the only way that you will really get to know when you are involved in financial transactions why is it that solicitors are always counseling people to make up their wills because so many families have split up after the death of parents and a bitterness has crept into the situation

Judas knew Jesus and he saw as no other disciple saw how Jesus lived for the things of God how little it meant to him what other people were breaking their necks to lay hold on position power wealth possession the foxes of holes the birds of the air have nests but the son of man hath not where to lay his head he we see how the very situation in which Christ stands how the order of nature or the disorder of nature is recovered how the strong man fully armed he's overcome by

Christ so much for the triumph of Christ Let us look at some of the elements in this tribe. Well there is first of all the forgiveness of sin.

[30 : 30] And there is secondly the overthrow of the principalities of power. Let us think a little about the forgiveness of sin.

Sin is a terrible albatross to hang around anybody's neck.

I'm sure that all of us, certainly some of us, can look back to acts in the past unkind, improper.

And we would give anything that these things had never happened in our lives.

When you reflect upon the barbarity of human age.

[31 : 37] When you think of the aggression that is in us. We need our policemen.

We need our soldiers. We need various protections to protect ourselves. And why is this?

Because the heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Now, no man can forgive a sin.

No man. Yes, he can accept the confession of another man.

And he can pass it over. But he cannot blot it out. You remember Paul. How in later years. He reflected upon the occasion when.

[32 : 45] Stephen was being stoned to death. And with very bitter reflection. Paul recalls. His part in that stoning.

He stood and held the clothes. Of those that cast the stones. Holy Stephen.

Calling upon his God. Do you remember how Paul again says. Of himself.

That in his own estimation. He was less than the least. Of all saints. Ah, my dear friends.

We take offense. If we are belittled. And we often try to push ourselves.

[33 : 47] To a place of prominence among our fellow men. How different. To what. Real piety.

Is. We find Paul saying. Less. Than the least. Of all saints. Why? Because he persecuted.

The church of God. There was something. Awfully cruel. Vindictive. Dictatorial. Autocratic. About the apostle Paul.

Before his conversion. He was absolutely ruthless. And it didn't matter. Whether you were a man. A woman.

Or a child. It didn't matter. If you stood in his way. Then you had to go. And it was only.

[34 : 51] When he was tamed by Christ. That we see the fruits of grace. And Paul. In a state of grace.

Coming to this estimation of himself. Full of regret. Less than the least. Of all sins. And how do you remove.

What you have done. Paul couldn't do it with Stephen. Stephen was dead. And however much he regretted it. He was part of that company.

That showed. That animosity. And malice. And venom. On that day. He couldn't do it with many of the church of God.

The church of Jesus Christ. Who had suffered horribly. Because of his organized persecution. And Paul had a gift. To organize.

[35 : 54] Now. Paul speaks about the forgiveness of sin. It was very precious to him. And if you have lived with your own sin.

And if you have come face to face with your own sin. There is nothing in this world. That would be more precious to you. Than that these sins.

Should be blotted out. We're thinking of the Lord's table. If the Lord spares us on the morrow. What about the people who go to the Lord's table.

Oh they must be good people. They must be holy people. Of course. But what does that goodness consist of?

A perfect life. A sinless life. A life that is full of. Virtuous things.

[36 : 55] No my dear friend. No. A thousand times no. No. I'm sure most of you.

Read or heard. Of Rabbi Duncan. Administering the sacrament. When he was handing the cup. This woman.

Couldn't stretch out her hand. Somehow. Her unworthiness. Gripped her. To the point. That she couldn't stretch out her hand.

To take the cup. Take it woman. Take it woman. It's for sinners. And not one person.

Goes lawfully. To the Lord's table. But stands in the place. Where that woman stood. Of another day. People.

- [37 : 52] Who are aware. That if God were to mark. Iniquity against them. Not before they were converted. It. But if he should mark.
- Iniquity against us. On any day. None of us. Should stand. And you know. That I'm quoting. From Psalm 130.
- Well. What is. What does Paul. What has Paul. To say. About Christ. For me. Says Paul. To live is Christ.
- He can't see. Past Christ. All other. Things and people. Have their own place.
- But infinitely. Higher. Than high. There stands. His redeemer. For me. To live is Christ. And to die is gay.
- [38 : 52] And Paul. Is in the spirit. He is being winged along. With this. Tremendous. Enthusiasm. Holy enthusiasm.
- Within him. And he is declaring. What Christ has done. Now he is not talking about theory. He is not talking about something. That he has worked out.
- By a careful process of reasoning. No. He is talking. From experience. There's nothing like it. My dear friends.
- It is only experience. That will teach us. Along the journey. That Christ. Alone.
- Has a preeminence. And a preciousness. That is uniquely. His. Well Paul writes about. The handwriting.
- [39 : 52] The written code. What is Paul referring to? Well he is actually referring to the law. Paul regarded the law.
- As holy. Righteous. And good. Romans 7. 12. It must be a reference. To the broken law. The misdeeds. The enmity. The animosity. Towards God. Towards his law.
- And he is speaking about the accusations. That the law leveled. Against him. Because. Because. He was continually. Breaking it.
- Is not where you and I stand. The handwriting. Was. The handwriting. Was. Handwritten.
- [40 : 53] Document. So we are told. And. It. Particularly. Indicated.
- Indebtedness. If you are like. An I. O. You. Something. Which you owed. And.
- To make it. A document. That could be brought. Legally against you. If you failed. In future days. To repay.
- You signed the document. And Paul uses. Three verbs. Describing. These debts. He first speaks about.
- Canceling the bond. Well you know. What it is. To cancel. A bond. It is. As if. It never.
- [41 : 49] Existed. And then he uses the word. Wiping it clean. You know. How on a blackboard.
- If you are writing with chalk. That you can take a wet cloth. You wipe it clean. It's as if. The writing. The writing.
- That has been wiped out. Was never there. And there is a third. Expression. Where it says.
- That Christ. Took. The handwriting. And nailed it. And nailed it. To the cross. Some commentators think. That this is. A reference. To the title.
- The tablet. That was fixed. Over. A crucified person's head. And on that tablet. Was written. The crimes. For which he was being put to death.
- [42 : 48] Now. Paul says here. How. Christ. Eh.

How he. Forgives. Trespasses. Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances. That was against us. Which was contrary to us.

And took it out of the way. And nailed it. To his cross. To his cross. To his cross. To his cross. Now. In this world.

There are. Various. Elements. And the Bible. Is very clear. In making reference. To evil powers.

To Satan. And Satanic. Spirit. And. Attempts have been made. As attempts are being made.

[43 : 48] Made. To read. Into. What Christ did here. Spoiling. Principalities. And powers. As a reference. To.

People. With authority. In this world. But. Across. The teaching of the scripture. It is impossible.

But to come to one conclusion. That. The evil. Of this life. Is something.

Which. Christ. Christ. Himself. Made. An open show. Of these powers. Destroying them. And taking away.

The. Usurped position. That they were taking. In this world. What was involved. In this overthrow.

[44 : 45] Well. There was first of all. The stripping. Of these powers. Disarming. Them. Of their weapons. And power.

And again. He says. He made a public spectacle. Of them. Showing them. As powerless. Powers.

And then. Triumphant. Over them. By the cross. And. Again. Commentators. See. In this reference.

Most probably. The procession. Of captives. As was practiced. In those days. When celebrating. A victory. And when the triumphant.

March. Went through the city. There were captives. There. To remind. The people. Of the victory. That had been obtained. What does it mean?

[45 : 47] It says. The scripture says. That Christ. Having spoiled. Principalities. And powers. He made a show. Of them. Openly. Now.

There are various ways. In which. We can approach. This subject. But let us. Confine ourselves.

To just one. Or two thoughts. How did Christ. Make a public. Spectacle. Of them. After all.

As. The non-Christian. Would see it. And as indeed. The disciples. Saw it. What happened. At Calvary. Was anything.

But. A triumph. It was. Only. When. They were. Taught. Out of the scriptures. And understood. The significance. Of what happened. That they were.

[46 : 50] Enable to come. To the conclusion. And to the conviction. Born again. To a new hope. What happened. What happened.

Well. First of all. There is. The open. Declaration. Not only. By the words.

Of Christ. Not only. By his actions. But also. By his death. The self. Giving.

Love. Of Christ. Christ. Now. We don't know. Anything. Of this. Self. Giving. Love. Which can.

Only. In its uniqueness. Be attributed. To Christ. Can a woman. Forsake.

[47 : 44] Or forget. Her sucking child. Yes. The scripture says. She may. There may be times.

Of great. Trial. And suffering. When a mother. Is. In such. A disoriented. Condition. That she is.

Unable. To come. To the assistance. Or to think. Of the suckling. That depends. Upon. His mother. For his very life.

But God. Does not forget. And the self. Giving of Christ. From beginning. To the end. Was an open display.

And a wonderful display. You remember. How he spoke. To John. At the cross. With reference. To his mother.

[48 : 44] Don't you think. That he had enough. On his mind. All the trauma. Of. The experiences. In the garden.

Leading up. To. Being stretched. On the cross. He spoke. He spoke. To his mother.

And he spoke. To John. Behold. Your mother. And John. Tells us. The gospel. Tells us. How John. Took.

The mother. Of Jesus. From that day. To his own home. Wasn't it strange. That there was no provision. For his mother. Did she not have a home.

Of her own. Ah well. Obviously she didn't. But she had.

[49 : 45] What was much better. Than any earthly home. The care. Of her loving. And living. Redeemer.

Father. What about that thief. On the cross. His pangs. Of conscience. The awful.

Conviction. That he was dying. Because he deserved. To die. And yet. Aware. That beside. That there was somebody. Who had a kingdom.

And whose kingdom. Was. The paradise. Of God. Remember me Lord.

When thou comest. To thy kingdom. What did Christ say. Today. You shall be with me. In paradise.

[50 : 45] And what about the awful. Blasphemy. What about the soldiers. That were gambling. For his clothes.

You hear that wonderful prayer. Father. Forgive them. For they know not. What they do.

The self giving of Christ. And remember. It is God. Giving himself. Do people ever say to you.

Oh. Christians. The biggest crooks. The ones you have to watch yourself most.

Christ. What are you to say to them. When they make wild accusations. All that you have to say.

[51 : 50] I am not commanding to you. Myself. Or any other Christian. Or any denomination. I'm only commanding to you.

Jesus Christ. After all. He's the only one. That you can't command. In the greatest sense. There are obvious flaws.

There are none in him. And his self giving. And of course. Many do recognize. Who don't accept the truth.

Of Christ. That if people lived. As Christ did. The world. Would be a very different place. Well there is that. First. Open show.

The triumph of God. The self giving. It's holy. It's divine. I wouldn't do it. And you wouldn't do it. Only God.

[52 : 49] Could do it. There is again. His obedience. There is a wonderful meekness. About Christ. He is not harassed. He is not irritable. He is not acting out of character. He is obeying.

He is obeying lovingly. He is obeying quietly. He is obeying. In the most emphatic way.

Remember. Remember. That Christ. Was not compelled to die. He gave his life. He gave his life.

Whatever was instrumental. In what led up to his death. What allowed these instruments of death. To work upon. Was the fact that he allowed them.

[53 : 48] He gave them. Amen. Amen. And we see. How. In this obedience.

He remained free. Uncontaminated. And compromised. And of course. We look at. The resurrection of Christ.

The grave couldn't hold him. How foolish. Of Caiaphas. How foolish. Of the. Members of the Sanhedrin.

As they set up their watch. That Christ. Could be chained. He was born free. And he remained free. And he set his people free.

If the son make you free. You shall be free. Indeed. Our beautiful. Lord.

[54 : 51] And saviour. Whose death. We hope. To remember. On the morrow. We see him.

In the grave. But only. For an appointed time. He rose. Remember.

And remember. What his resurrection. Did. It did not achieve. Deliverance.

Our deliverance. From sin and death. Death. But. His resurrection. Has brought. The assurance.

That we shall be. Holy. And perfectly. Delivered. From. Sin. And death. My dear. Christian friend. If.

[55 : 48] The sin. That is in you. Upsets you. Remember. That. That. Is only. What all. The holy men.

Of the bible. Subscribed to. In their own experience. And remember. It's an experience. That is. The direction. And the inspiration.

Of the holy spirit. And that is where. The sheer. Beauty. And the harmony. Of the book of psalms. Comes. Into its own.

The very description. Of the experiences. Of the child. Of God. But someday. Someday.

There will be no sin. There will be no death. The contamination. Of it all. Is something. That will come.

[56 : 43] To an end. But what about Christians. Well. As. As. As. In the case.

Of their master. And as. In the case. Of their lord. Life. Speaks. Of conflict. Any man.

Who thinks. That to believe. In Christ. Is to sail. Into. A serenity. That will continue. With him. And anybody.

Who thinks. That the joy. Of the lord. Is to be released. From all. The inner conflict. That was common. To the sense.

Of the bible. Is living. In cloud. Cuckoo land. It is. Not. According. To the reality. Of the situation.

[57 : 39] May God. Enable. Us. All. To meet. The situation. Independence. Upon himself. Stop.

Looking. To people. Let us pray. Oh lord.