

The Disarming and Defeat of Demons in the the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ

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[0 : 0 0] Father, thank you for Jesus. Thank you that he came to earth. Thank you that he lived a sinless life. Thank you for his miracles. Thank you for his teaching. Thank you, Father, that he had disciples, that he taught them so that his teaching would continue. Thank you for his death upon the cross. Thank you, Father, that he tasted all there is to taste of death with nothing left over. Thank you, Father, for his mighty resurrection, for his defeat of death, his defeat of the sin which causes death and his defeat of all hostile spiritual powers in his resurrection. Father, make us disciples of Jesus, gripped by the gospel, learning to live for your glory and not our own.

And this we ask in Jesus's name. Amen. Please be seated. So a couple of weeks ago, I walked to a coffee shop with a friend and we bought our coffee and then we went and sat down. And the very first thing he said to me is, did you notice that that woman was wearing a talisman or an amulet to ward off the evil eye? And I said, I have to confess, I didn't notice it at all. He said, yeah. And then we had a bit of a conversation about it. It was just then a couple of days later that the National Post, one of the legacy news outlets that I read, it had a fairly long article by a young woman who's one of the style editors, believe it or not.

And she talked about how the resurgence of magic and spells and crystals and things like that amongst young professional women in Toronto, the types of people, types of young women who've graduated from good universities with good law degrees, work in good law firms, or are chartered accountants working in top chartered accountant firms on Bay Street in Toronto. And the article was about, in fact, a smudging ceremony whereby her new apartment was cleansed. And I think it was the auras were balanced. And she just talked about the resurgence of interest in this.

Believe it or not, the Bible, I mean, so somebody say, why on earth is George talking about stuff like this? It's Easter Sunday. We should be talking about Easter stuff. Well, I mean, it is Easter Sunday.

We do remember today, Christians remember how Jesus died upon the cross, and he really truly died on the cross. In fact, it's one of the things that even the most skeptical scholars today would accept that Jesus died on the cross. And we remember how the disciples fled, how basically everybody thought he'd stay dead. We remember how he was in the tomb for three days, and how on the third day, we remember how angel rolled away the stone, people found the tomb empty, how the body of Jesus has never been found, never produced, and how on this day, the beginning of this day, there began to be witnesses that not only the reason that the tomb was empty was that Jesus had risen from the dead.

[3 : 07] And that's what we do remember today. And this story has a great relevance to our current interest in our culture, to things like magic, spelt with a K, and spirits, and astrology, and seances. It has, in fact, a profound and important meaning to this. In fact, I don't know if you knew this, but basically, every religion in the world has problems or has a significant number of adherents who are worried about demons. Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, it's a very, very major thing amongst many Muslims to be concerned about demons, and of course, paganism. And so the Easter story actually has an awful lot to say about it, and we're going to look at it by Paul in Colossians chapter 2. So it'd be a great help for me if you got a Bible. Colossians chapter 2, we're going to begin reading at verse 6. Verse 6, and if you don't have a Bible, there's some Bibles up here at the front. I will not be at all offended if you get up out of your seat and go to get a Bible so you can follow along for yourself. And the book of Colossians was originally a letter. It was a letter from a man by the name of Paul to a church in Colossae.

He'd never been there. It came about as a result of his ministry in a place called Ephesus, which is in Turkey, what we now call Turkey. And basically, a person that became a follower of Jesus, a pagan who had become a follower of Jesus through Paul's ministry in Ephesus, went and planted this church in Colossae. And that's where Paul is writing to. And it's about, depending how you count, 25 to 30 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus. Anyway, here's how it goes. Verse 6, Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, where it also can mean as Lord. In the original language, it can be either the or as. Both are valid translations. That's why some of your translations might say as and some the. In other words, he means it both ways. He carefully chose a phrase that could mean either the Lord or as Lord. Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. Now, just sort of a time out here moment, just before we get into the stuff about demons, because this doesn't, at least at first, look like it touched much about spirits and magic and astrology and seances. A lot of people think that when the book of Colossians was written, these two sentences were Paul's point of the whole book, that the stuff that goes before and the stuff that goes after are all explaining this very, very short little pithy saying. And that it's, in a sense, like the center of a wheel, and all of the spokes come down from there, and all of the spokes go up from there. And we're going to return to it at the end of the sermon. But for now,

I just wanted to point that out, like when you look at the structure of the book, that's probably the function of this, these two verses. It's sort of explaining the whole point of the book in a very, very short bit. But then in verse 8, he goes on, and this is where it's relevant to us in terms of spirits and amulets and smudging ceremonies and astrology and casting spells.

Look what he says in verse 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.

Now just pause. I'm going to read that again. For some of us, this is a very, very troubling text. Is Paul here saying that Christians, that all of you folks who go to a secular university, that you shouldn't be going to a secular university, you shouldn't be studying philosophy, like human thought, that it's all just coming from elemental spirits? Is he saying that back in his day that nobody should have read Aristotle or Plato or Socrates, that it was all wrong?

[7 : 22] Is that what he's saying? It sounds like that a little bit. And I can just imagine some of my friends in coffee shops, if I was to read this verse to them, they'd pounce on this. In fact, in terms of how Christians are anti-intellectual, they're opposed to the mind, they're afraid of thinking, they're afraid of new ideas. Is this what Paul is saying? That Christians should live in fear of new ideas? Let's just read it again. 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. Well, first of all, if you just, if you read the New Testament, you'll see that that Paul quotes Greek poets. And so if he quotes, if he knows Greek poets well enough to quote them, then he's probably not saying that you should just not know what Greeks had to say. And in fact, you might not know this unless you've studied it. One of the big struggles often, there are big debates within New Testament studies. And I virtually never referenced this in my sermons.

But if you go back and look at academic commentaries, in many academic commentaries, they go on and on and on for pages. Many trees have been cut down because of all of the different parallels and connections of that New Testament letter or gospel with pagan mythology and pagan thought.

And on the other side, there are people who tend to emphasize all of the different ways that the letters and the gospels are connected to Old Testament thought. And there can be a big debate, actually, amongst academics as to whether it's more reflecting the thought and the practices in the pagan world or in the Old Testament world. The reason I'm just, and you just sort of have to take me on faith on this, the fact is, it shows that all of the writers were deeply aware of pagan thought.

Whether or not the commentators are correct that it goes back to it, it shows that they're very, they're knowledgeable of it. So what's going on is that in this verse, there's, it has a phrase in it, which is almost impossible to translate into English and make it good grammar. So they take it away.

But he's not talking about philosophies. He's talking about the philosophy. The definite article is there before the word philosophy. And what he's talking about is that there is a movement within Colossi, and he's probably thinking of a particular thing, and they've brought to the church the philosophy. And unless the church gets in tune and in step with the philosophy, then they're missing out. They're not going to be as true. They're not going to be as effective. They're not going to be as successful. They're not going to be as culturally relevant. The Christian faith, the gospel, the Bible needs the insight. If I go, if I, maybe if I, anyway, needs the insights of the philosophy.

[10 : 18] And if you think about it for a second, what that, that insight or that problem is something that's always been with the church. I mean, you know, one of the things which is, is become, we've become aware of looking back in, in earlier days is that often the patriarchy and a patriarchal way of looking at the world, that it, it just often, it just, it, it just brings itself into the Christian faith in such a way that the, it's almost as if the faith has to fit in with certain patriarchal or monarchical forms of thought. But in, in, when I was in university a long, long time ago, the, the idea would have been that unless, unless the Christian faith got in tune with Marxism, it wasn't going to be relevant or effective in the world. Or in other parts, there was this whole view that sort of everything is all about science. And there were, was this thought that unless the Bible is, is it tuned with a particular understanding of science, the Bible is going to be meaningless.

It's going to be ineffective. In our days, it's queer studies and transgender studies, isn't it? I don't mean to offend anybody here, but I'm just saying that there's this constant pressure on the church. What is the philosophy today? Well, the philosophy is that unless we get in tune with the insights of transgender studies, cultural studies, queer studies, certain understandings of feminist studies, then while the Bible sort of, it's irrelevant, it's incomplete, it's, it's just not very helpful.

So, so actually what Paul is pointing out here is a problem in the church where there is this sense that's come in of, you need to be in tune with the philosophy. And, and Paul here, he doesn't mince words. The Bible here doesn't mince words. In fact, now that some of you know this, it might make you even more anxious about what Paul says. Look at it again in verse eight. See to it that no one takes you captive, captive. And actually the image there is of plunder. It's as if pirates or something have taken your ship and they don't not only have taken it, the ship captive, they're plundering the ship. They're plundering you as they make you a captive. See to it that no one takes you captive, plunders you by the philosophy, which is characterized by empty deceit. At best, it's a human tradition, or it might be according to the elemental spirits of the world, but not according to Christ.

Now, this word elemental spirits is a reference to what Christians in other places call demons. As I said, some of you now are going to be very, very, maybe anxious about this. In fact, is this an example of Paul demonizing his opponents? That you don't have to deal with them or address them. You can just call them demonic and then you can just write them off. That, by the way, is a human problem. It's one of the problems which is happening in universities right now. A major problem in universities is that if you have a speaker who doesn't agree with what a particular group has to say, it's sort of culturally allowed to just call them names and to yell at the top of your voice, to shut them up, to threaten violence. It's a human problem. It's not a Christian problem. It's a human problem. But is that what Paul is doing here? Well, actually, if you read through the entire book of Colossians, and even as we go through these next few verses, you'll see that, no, Paul doesn't shout at them and yell at them and call them names to shut them up.

He engages them in discussion and shows where they're wrong. He shows why they're wrong. Why this whole idea of the need of Jesus' gospel needing the philosophy to actually be relevant or to have greater value is just completely and utterly mistaken. But he does also say that, in fact, it is often elemental spirits that are behind the entire movement.

[14 : 22] So here's the thing, and it's a little bit hard for many of us when we read the Bible to notice this because we're looking for certain words. We're looking for the word demon or unclean spirit, but the Bible has a variety of ways to refer to such spirits. In fact, in this text which Jeremiah read and which we're going to look at, three times it references demons. Verse 8, where it says, elemental spirits. Verse 10, where it says, who is the head of all rule and authority. Rule and authority there are another way of referring to demons. And then if you go down to verse 15, he disarmed the rulers and authorities. That's disarming demons. That, in fact, the way the Bible here describes these unclean spirits is as elemental spirits, rulers, or authorities.

So just, we need to pause here for a second. This is very, very important for us to understand what's going on. If you could put up the first point. The Bible here is making a claim that human beings are not alone. Invisible beings do exist and they do influence human beings. So in a sense, like I could just imagine, what would Richard Dawkins or Christopher Hitchens, if he was still alive, what would they say about that National Post article about young women doing smudging and casting spells? Well, if you're at all familiar with Christopher Hitchens' writings, he would mock them mercilessly. But on this particular one, Christians are with the young women. Christians are with the young women. That invisible beings do exist. And they do influence human affairs. Now, I might want to ask them, if I was in a conversation with them, how on earth, given that you believe in evolution, can you believe that these spirits, that it's completely, it's completely utterly nonsensical to have, to believe in something like evolution and to believe in the spirits, like it doesn't make any sense that your thoughts are incoherent. I'd probably want to say that to them. But at the end of the day, I would say they are correct. We would agree with them that they are correct. But on the other hand, we'd want to say something else. In fact, actually, isn't it interesting, those who have friends, and maybe some of you are involved in this, that in fact, usually when in the world of, is this just me that keeps figuring out what you're doing?

Is it on? Okay, this, I haven't done this in a while. Now I can pretend I'm a more classic evangelical Billy Graham style preacher. I can hold on to this. You can just imagine that it's not a table that we've taken from the bar to put drinks on, that it's a pulpit. And in John Stott's famous church, it's, I think it had on the pulpit, he had written on it, Lord, may we see Jesus or something like that. So I'm looking at that when I'm not looking at my notes and looking at you.

I just can't wander, which is going to be really hard for me. But anyway, those of you who remember when we used to own a church building, I used to speak in the pulpit, and I couldn't move around.

I used to describe it to my Baptist friends that it was like the ultimate fighter cage. You were all narrowly in there. And I'd compensate for not being able to walk by waving my arms around a lot and doing pointing motions like this. So I'll see if it reemerges where I start doing lots of this sort of like, I don't know, jumping jacks, sort of with my arms, because I get going.

[18:20] Where was I? Oh, yes. Okay. If you're familiar at all with any of the literature, or maybe if you've been involved in some of the current practices of magic with a K and astrology, how is it that they often talk about this and why it's so superior to the Christian faith? They'll talk about things, how they'll talk about elemental spirits. They'll talk about the goddess Gaia or Gaia and how, and how, in fact, such practices going back is far older than Christianity. Like, why should you listen to Jesus? Because we're in touch with something which is older, which is not just white and male, even though Jesus wasn't really white, even though it's just not white and male and all about patriarchal power, that it's somehow connected to the elemental stuff. The very, very, it's earthy, it's grounded, it is the elemental spirits. And they'll talk about how they want to get in touch with rulers and authorities, because if you get in touch with the right type of authorities, then you can cast the evil eye, you can do these spells, you can affect things. In fact, the language which the Bible uses here is, in fact, surprisingly contemporary. It's the way people talk.

So if the first point is that Christians actually agree with these young women that there are, in fact, human beings are not alone. Invisible beings do exist, and they do actually influence human beings. I mean, that's what this text is saying here. On one level, people are upset about it, but on one, and maybe the young woman in the article would be upset about it, but on the other hand, you have to say, one moment here, you cast spells because you think it'll make you more prosperous, it'll affect things. So why is it, like, the Bible here is just saying the same thing you're saying, isn't it? That it might be that whenever the philosophy comes against the, you know, comes into a church, that Paul's saying that it probably has elemental spirits behind. But here's the place where Christians are going to really disagree with women, these young women, and where, if you're here involved in it, here's the biblical warning, if you could put it up next. To become more powerful, people seek spirits, in quote marks. But spirits are really demons, and they will only hurt you.

Here's where Christians part company with the article in the National Post and all that it represents.

And with the person wearing whatever it was to keep off the evil eye and whatever set of beliefs went along with that, is that, in fact, the Bible teaches, in fact, it teaches even here that to become more powerful people, people seek spirits, elemental spirits, rulers and authorities.

We believe that somehow or another we can get in touch with them and that we can control them and we can use them. But the Bible says that you think you're using them, but they only want to capture and plunder you. They will only ultimately make you feel more anxious, more afraid.

[21 : 22] They will only cause you grief. Because they are not just elemental spirits and rulers or authorities, that the other biblical language of unclean spirits or demons is, in fact, true.

That, in fact, the Bible rejects any difference between white magic and black magic. So if you look at this verse again, verse 8, the whole point of this, look how he talks now about it.

He says, see to it that no one takes you captive, plunders you, because it's that double image in the original language by the philosophy, which is really just empty. In other words, it has no power.

And it's deceitful. It misleads you. And that it's at best human, but it's really according to elemental spirits.

And it's not according to Christ. Paul is, in a sense, the Bible here has thrown down the gauntlet. Try to be very, very clear, a very clear word of warning to people, you know, as said in native cultures, I mean, First Nations cultures, it's part of their religions in Hinduism and Buddhism, in Islam, many people in Christendom. It's a very, very deep warning.

[22 : 48] Now, some of you might say, okay, George, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, time out, time out here. That's a very, very quick move, George. You're really good at moving things around really quickly. You know, follow the, you know, where's the bean? You move things around really quickly.

Like, George, Christianity is just another the philosophy. Like, you've just done a little fast one on us here, you know, but what's the difference between these other things and Christianity? Like, it's just another the philosophy.

That's all you're saying, George. Is it why? Just a matter of power? Is it just because, I don't know, you think yours is right and you must be right? Is that what's going on? Not at all.

In fact, it's a really, really good question. You know, because in fact, if you read the New Testament, and this is a very hard thing for people to get their minds around, especially because we come in a Christendom context, is that, and I have a hard time convincing my, when I have conversations around this with people, but actually the greatest critique of religion is found in the New Testament.

The greatest critique of religion and spirituality is found in the New Testament, because at the heart of the New Testament is not a claim that it is the philosophy. The heart of the New Testament is not religion or spirituality, which is just different types of ideas and advice.

[24 : 10] At the heart of the Christian message is that it's news. It's news. In a sense, you could put up on one side all the religions and philosophies and spiritualities, and on one side, on the other side, you have the Christian faith, which is ultimately a proclamation of something that God has done.

It's a sharing of news and the consequences that come from that news. That's the very, very first thing. It's not just a claim that somehow this is the philosophy.

It's news, something that news of what God has done, breaking into human affairs in a way which can have the most profound effect on this side of the grave and for all eternity for those who hear the news and respond as God hopes that you will respond to that news.

It's news, not advice. And we'll see some of what that news is in the very next verses. Look at it. Verse 9. We've spent a long time on verse 8. That's good. Sometimes it's important to spend a long time on one verse.

But remember I said Paul doesn't just sort of diss elemental spirits. He starts to explain the news and what the news means in terms of the philosophy.

[25 : 30] And one of the things that he mentions right off the bat in verse 9 is an astounding piece of news. And it's news. It's a claim of something that God has done. It's not a claim that Paul has had a sophisticated type of philosophical insight or that he's had a mystical experience.

It's news. And what is that news? For in him, Jesus, the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily. He's saying to the people in Colossae, if you could go back in time.

Paul himself is maybe even saying, you know, maybe I saw the odd glimpse of Jesus or I heard about it. I wish I could have gone and looked at him and spent some time listening to him before he died and rose again. Because when you saw Jesus, you saw God.

The fullness of deity dwelling bodily. Well, why should anybody believe this? Well, we're going to get to this in a moment.

If I forget, yell it out and ask me. But it's news. Look at verse 10. Continuing with the news. Well, verse 9 and then verse 10. Now, when it says here, the head here, it doesn't mean as if, I don't know, like, I think maybe there's a couple of people here who own their own companies.

[26 : 52] In a sense, they're the head of the company. It doesn't mean head like that. It's a metaphor for having authority over. So it's very, very relevant for those who believe in elemental spirits and rulers and authorities.

The Bible here is saying, I just want to give you this news. And the news is that God, the Son of God, took a body. And when you saw Jesus, you saw the second person of the Trinity bodily, fully God.

And as fully God, he ultimately is over and has authority over whatever you think of elemental spirits and whatever rulers and authorities, whatever spirits you want to call rulers and authorities, that over them, truly over them, is Jesus.

Because he's God and God is over all invisible and visible beings. And as well as that, he's going to say that, you know what, you don't need.

The part of the news is that since God has broken into our created order, that he has come into our order, whatever filling you need.

[28 : 04] How can you get anything more than that, what you get from the only true and living God who's created and sustained all things? But the news continues in verse 11.

And this is going to be a bit of an odd verse. It has to be puzzled over. It's not a hard verse. It's a very clear verse. But, you know, we're so just used to an Instagram world and Bible light that we don't often catch these symbols and stuff like that.

And for many of us, it's just it's a long journey in reading the Bible to start to become comfortable with these types of metaphors and images and references that Paul uses when he speaks.

But in verse 11, in him also, in him also, you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands by putting off the body of flesh by the circumcision of Christ, 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.

A very, very dense sentence. Let's just break it apart. If you're at all familiar with the Old Testament, if you've read it many, many times, one of the constant claims in the Old Testament. So, first of all, the circumcision was a cutting of something from a male's private parts.

[29 : 21] And it was a symbol that you were part of the covenant with God through Moses. And the constant claim in the Old Testament by the prophets is that God would circumcise our hearts.

The command center of who we are. And what Paul is saying here is that Paul is saying that whole Old Testament longing that God, by his Holy Spirit, would, in a sense, cut our hearts, the command center, that he would cut us at a personal level in such a way that we would be changed.

That that's what happens with Jesus. I'm going to have to leave the mic if I... I'll be right back. Hopefully I won't get stuck by a thorn.

This is a cut flower. In fact, actually, one of the things I'm going to announce is when the service is over, we have no use for these roses. I want to invite people to take a rose home. It's serious.

Just after the service, come and take a rose. And everything else. You can take the glass jars as well if you really want. We bought them at the dollar store.

[30 : 40] But here's the thing. This is a cut flower. Right? It looks really beautiful. And I was just saying to somebody at the 8 o'clock service, I don't know, maybe it was lilies or whatever we used to get, Easter flowers.

I hated the smell of them. And it used to be when we had a church building, the whole back would be filled with these flowers. I hated the smell of them. It ruined Easter for me. True confessions now.

Roses smell nice, at least to me. But this is a cut flower. So what is Paul saying here? Paul is saying here in verse 11, In him also you were circumcised.

This is the news. You were circumcised with a circumcision made without hand by putting off the body of flesh by the circumcision of Christ. It's saying that one of the news is, is that when you put your faith and trust in Jesus, the flesh here refers to that part of the human being, which is in rebellion against God.

And what the Bible is saying here is that when you put your faith and trust in Jesus, your flesh, that part of you in rebellion against God, it still exists. It still has a smell. It definitely does not smell like a rose.

[31 : 42] But it's now a cut flower. It's now a cut flower. When you put your faith and trust in Jesus and he comes in, we're going to see that in the very next image.

He really, there's an identification of Christ with you. He really takes you in his arms and holds you. And that part of you in rebellion against him, it now becomes a cut flower.

He's cut it. It's going to wither. And it's really, here's another thing.

I don't want to, you know, we, here's the other thing which is so cool is Paul, Paul connects circumcision with baptism.

In other words, for those of us of Anglican or Presbyterian or Lutheran backgrounds, this is a text that is one of the texts which justifies infant baptism. I don't want to get into it.

[32 : 47] I hope I haven't lost you Baptist and Pentecostal and Methodist types by saying that. But by connecting circumcision, which is done to infants, to baptism, it's in fact one of the many verses in the Bible whereby biblical Anglicans and Presbyterians believe that the baptism of infants is valid.

In fact, I'll explain that in a moment. Look at verse 12. OK, so what this text is saying is that the baptism symbolism symbolizes something.

And baptism, one of the senses of baptism is it's an image of a ship that sinks. And when the ship sinks, it's, I mean, this is real immersion, okay?

When the ship sinks, it means that water is everywhere. It's a complete and utter immersion to the point of death. And what the Bible text is saying is it's not that the ritual of baptism somehow does this because you need faith.

But when you put your faith and trust in Jesus, when you put your hand out to him that he will be your savior and your Lord, my arm isn't long enough to reach Jesus, but his arm is long enough to reach me.

[33 : 59] And I reach out for Jesus. He reaches out for me. He takes my hand and my hand. There will be many times when my flesh, my rebellion against God means that my hand goes like this.

In fact, I might even be trying to pull away, but Jesus's hand never lets go of me. And my identification with Jesus is so complete, as we're going to see in a moment, that when Jesus dies, in a sense, even though it's passed in time, it's my death that he dies and I die with him.

And when he is raised, it is my resurrection, even though I still have to wait for that in the future. But in the present time, I have the new life living within me. And by the way, this is why when Luther and Calvin say that when you have doubts, think of your baptism.

They're not saying because baptism saves you. What are they saying? What is symbolized in infant baptism? The baby does nothing.

You don't baptize a baby because it's innocent and beautiful and cute, although they are all those things. The baby does nothing. The parents bring the baby.

[35 : 03] The priest pours the water or the other lay person pours the water, symbolizing complete and utter immersion, or if you're Eastern Orthodox, actually immersing the baby. The baby does nothing in salvation.

How much do you or I do to warrant salvation? Nothing. Nothing. God makes me alive. God is the one who connects me to Jesus.

God is the one who raises me with Jesus. God is the one who transfers me from death to life in Jesus. God does it all. And that's why Calvin and Luther said, when you have doubts, think of your baptism.

You did nothing. It's a beautiful image. It's a beautiful image. And that continues on.

I'm sorry, I'm getting carried away. The time is just flying. How is it flying? I hope I haven't put you all to sleep. Look at this. Verse 13. Remember what I said about how, who is it who does all of this?

[36 : 10] It's God who does it. Verse 13. This is the news. What is the news? You try to make yourself right with God. You can do nothing. You think that playing with rulers and authorities and elemental spirits that you will have power.

They will only plunder you and hurt you. You need to call out to God to have mercy. And if you call out to have mercy, God listened. And he sent his son to die upon the cross.

Look at verse 13. This is the news. And you who were dead, a corpse. Think of a body in a funeral home. And you who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh.

Because the sinful nature and rebellions against God was a rooted plan, not a cut flower. What happens? God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses.

All our trespasses. George, how on earth can you possibly say that? And Paul continues on with the image. What is the image? Because God canceled the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.

[37 : 24] This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. Over there you can see a picture of Jesus dying upon the cross. Actually, I forgot to put up one of my...

We'll get my point points in a moment. And you'll notice that little... Like it looks like an I, an N, an R, and an I. And what Paul is referring to, which all of his readers would have understood, because crucifixion was a common means of torture and death by the Romans.

Practiced in modern days by ISIS. It's returned. ISIL. And in the Roman custom, they put the principal charge that the person was found guilty of over the person who was being crucified and died.

And what Paul is saying is this. He's saying George. He's saying Don. He's saying Louise. He's saying, you know, he's saying Fred or Sally. What you need to understand is this.

Jesus was the sinless lamb of God. He lived a life of perfect obedience. He did not die for his own sins. Yes. He, in my place condemned, he stood.

[38 : 27] In your place condemned, he stood. And what you have to understand is for a second, take away that charge. Behold the king of the Jews. And every single thing that you have ever done wrong.

And everything that you should have done that you didn't do, which is another way of doing wrong, by not doing anything. And everything that you've ever done and the consequences that should have happened and the justice that should be meted out to you.

You could make a list. And in your case, we couldn't put it up in one sign. We'd need memory sticks, right? Wouldn't we? Some of us would need a bushel basket of memory sticks.

And every single thing, I've seen all of them. I've missed nothing. I've seen your thoughts. I've seen what you think when you're driving. That's like maybe a hundred offenses right there by the time we get home for some of us.

News for you. You are not the best driver in the world. News for me. I'm not the best driver of the world. And the images, every one of those were the ones nailed above the head of Jesus.

[39 : 35] And when Jesus is dying upon the cross, justice is being done. He stands for you.

Could you put up the point, please? My past, present, and future debts caused by my wrongdoing were nailed to the cross, so they are paid in full by Jesus Christ's death on my behalf.

And so what does Paul say here? Look at how he continues in verse 15. This gets us back to these rulers and authorities and elemental spirits. What does Jesus do then with his death upon the cross?

He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame. The word open, by triumphing over them in him or in the cross. It can mean either one in the Greek.

Paul chose a word that could have a double meaning when he chose the word. He chose it very carefully. And open shame. Remember in the book of Matthew, when it's at the very beginning of the Christmas story, Matthew, I mean, Joseph finds out that Mary is pregnant.

[40 : 39] He doesn't believe that it was a miracle. And he doesn't want to cause her open shame. Same word. So he resolves to divorce her quietly. So it won't be a public scandal.

And what Paul is saying here, what the Bible is saying here, is that when in the real history under a pilot talked about by Josephus and other historians and other historians, Latin and Greek who knew about the existence of Jesus and Jewish historians who knew about the existence of Jesus and knew about his death upon the cross.

And when Jesus was dying upon the cross and he rose from the dead, he publicly showed that all these elemental spirits and rulers authorities, they were defeated.

And if you say, Paul, how can you know that any of this is true? And Paul will say, I was one of the people who beat up Christians and wanted to have them killed and help to have them killed.

I was one of those guys. And I saw the risen Jesus. I am exhibit A, that it's real. How does it, how does this cross disarm demons?

[41 : 51] This is going to be a little bit corny if you could put it up. Blast. I know. Andrew said it's my Baptist heritage springing up.

But, you know, this is what demons do. And I'm not that the Bible here is not talking about possession, but how every single one of us have experience with demons.

Because what do they do? They whisper in my ear. They're right between my two ears speaking to me. And when they speak, they blaspheme. They lie. They accuse.

They slander. And they tempt. They say, no, God can't do that. God doesn't care about you. God hates you.

You're no good. And did God really say? Does he really answer your prayers? Oh, look what you just did.

[42 : 48] Look what you just looked at on your computer. How on earth can you possibly call yourself a Christian? Oh, look at this church. They're all full of hypocrites.

They all think they're better than other people. They just want to hunt witches. You know, I think I'm going to go for my coffee break. But I think I'm going to go somewhere where I can have that chat with that young woman that I might flirt with.

Or, you know what? I don't know. It's income tax time. You know, the government's just corrupt. But, you know, the province of Ontario, they've completely and utterly massively messed up the electrical system of this province.

I think if I just cut, take a few of these dollars back by cheating on my taxes, that's fine. They blaspheme. They lie. They accuse. They slander. They tempt. And what does Paul, how does that, how does the cross disarm?

When Satan tempts me to despair, I'm to think about this verse and what Jesus has done for me on the cross.

[43 : 47] No, demons, it's not the case that God is far away, that he's distant, that he doesn't hear, that he doesn't come. He died on the cross for me. No, it's not true that Christians think they're better.

It's not true that we think that we have the only philosophy that's true. It's not true that we think we're somehow better. We're just one beggar telling another beggar where to find free bread.

That's what the cross reminds me of. And, yes, I know I've done those bad things. And I know it has not been a good witness to Jesus. And I know I have done terrible things in my past. But you know what?

When Jesus died on the cross, every one of my past, present, and future offenses, it was paid for. And that's why it's not right, Satan, to say that I'm not really a Christian.

Because it's not because of my efforts. I just think about the cross. I think about what Jesus has done for me on the cross. He's the one who made me alive, not my own lies.

[44 : 44] And how can I go and how can I think that it's all right for me to do those wrong things when I look at the great love of Jesus for me and what he did to make me right?

How are the elemental spirits and rulers and authorities disarmed? By thinking upon the gospel, the good news of Jesus and what he did for us on the cross. The deep need for every Christian is to be more gripped by the gospel.

I need that. Pray for that for me. Because Satan tempts me to despair and tells me of the fault within. Can you put up the final one?

Look again at verse. Remember I said verses 6 and 7 is sort of the ties, the whole book of Colossians together. Look at verse 6 and 7 again. Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord.

Therefore, as you've received the one who died with all of your trespasses nailed above his head because he died in your place. He is the Messiah, the Christ. He is the Lord.

[45 : 51] He is over demons and elemental spirits. He is over them. As you receive Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in him. Let God root you more deeply in the gospel.

Let him build you in the gospel. Let him establish you in the gospel. And as you were taught, as you were more fully rooted and built and established on the gospel, you will discover rather than anxiety, thanksgiving.

Friends, this is good news for you. Please stand. Thank you. If you are here and you have anything to do with astrology or seances, all I can tell you is to flee them, get rid of them.

If you're having trouble getting rid of them, speak to somebody from the church. We'll pray for you. We'll help you. Just get rid of it. Just get rid of it. You think you need it? It's a lie. It's a lie.

It's a lie. If you haven't given your life to Jesus right now, and if you've been involved in any of these things, the devil is going right at you. It's not true. It's not true. It won't happen.

[47 : 00] Won't work. You're too bad. You're too ruined. You're too wrecked. Nobody loves you. Everybody hates you. It's a lie. Reach your hand out to Jesus. He'll reach down.

He'll grab your hand. Your arm isn't long enough to reach his. His is long enough to reach yours. Your grip isn't strong enough. His grip is strong enough. That's the gospel.

That's the good news. Reach out now. Don't waste your time. Reach out now. And for those of us who are Christians, that's why our mission statement is making disciples of Jesus gripped by the gospel, learning to live for his glory.

Let's pray. Father, you know the different ways that Satan tempts us to despair and tells us of the fault within. Father, make us disciples of Jesus who are gripped by the gospel, who remember what Jesus did for us on the cross, that these demons, that there's a part of us which is in rebellion against you, but you cut it.

It's now a cut flower cut from its root, will no longer grow. Father, thank you for Jesus. Thank you for what he did on the cross. Thank you that he came to die for us. Thank you that he rose.

[48 : 06] Thank you that he rose in history. Thank you that it's true. Thank you that he can become our savior. Thank you for him being our savior. Make us disciples of Jesus, gripped by the gospel, learning to live for your glory.

And we pray this in the sweet and precious name of Jesus and all God's people said, Amen.