

Why Build on Christ, part 2

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Date: 10 March 2024

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[0 : 0 0] We as a church are meant to glorify God. We are meant to delight in Christ. And one of the things that we're doing, the mission that we're on, is to build lives that treasure Christ.

It's the same thing as what you would find in the Great Commission, where it says to make disciples. And the way that that is done is through ministry. And ministry happens when someone, in prayerful dependence upon the Holy Spirit, proclaims the Word of God and patiently waits.

Anyone can give food to the hungry. Anyone can give clothes to those without. Anyone can give housing to someone who doesn't have it. But only the church of the Lord Jesus Christ can give the gospel.

It doesn't mean that the church shouldn't give food and clothing and housing. It means that those are a necessary way for us to love the world around us.

But that's not ministry. Ministry happens when we take the Word of God and we give it to other people, praying that God would do something in their lives. And one of the challenges I left you with is the idea that husbands, we want to take the first stab at this, at learning how we proclaim the Word of God to someone else.

[1 : 2 4] So we put the seven-week challenge out and said, listen, read through 1 John for seven weeks and read this out loud with your household, praying together and encouraging one another.

And that task is still in front of us. We've got just a couple more weeks and the challenge is over. And maybe you didn't pick up the challenge, but maybe hearing me talk about it now, you're saying, well, you know what, I should do that.

Absolutely. Go right ahead. Pick it up today, week one, and start it. Just because you didn't start it with us doesn't mean a hill of beans. What's important is that you do this thing, that you share the Word with one another.

It's the first step in where we're headed as we build lives that treasure Christ. So I want to pray here at the beginning. Pray for you as you do this. Pray that God would encourage you in this.

And then when we're through with that, then we will dive into our text this morning in Colossians 2. Father, thank you so much that you have not left us as orphans without knowledge, without an understanding of who you are, but you have given to us your perfect Word.

[2 : 3 5] your Word that shows us and displays for us and helps us to understand who you are and what you require of us. And I pray for those who have taken up this seven-week challenge.

Father, some of them probably, maybe they're facing times of discouragement because they just don't understand what they're reading, or maybe they're facing discouragement because it doesn't seem as though it's encouraging the people that they're reading it to, or maybe they didn't take up the challenge at the beginning, and they're just afraid that maybe, well, now they've missed the boat.

Lord, I pray that you would encourage every single one of them to hold on, to persevere in doing good, for in due season they shall reap if they do not grow weary.

And we pray, Father, that you would grow our faith, that you would increase our delight in Christ as we share that Word with one another.

Father, I pray for households that are having the Scriptures read aloud. I pray that you would bless those households, that you would help them to fight sin, you would help them to fight discouragement, you would help them to live in light of the cross and all that you have done for us, and they would live in the victory of the resurrection.

[3 : 57] And Father, we pray that you would get all the glory on all the praise as together we seek to build lives that treasure Christ.

Help us now in the preaching of the Word. Use this Word to build lives this morning, we pray. In Christ's name, amen. Colossians 2, 11 and 12.

Let me read the passage, and then we're going to do a little backtracking to get into this sermon. It begins at verse 11. It kind of picks up in the middle of a sentence, and it says, Now, I need to back up a little bit to give us a little context, because just reading those two verses by themselves, a little bit confusing.

And so I want to back up and kind of get back into verse 8 and just kind of recap what we've been talking about. The Colossian church is facing false teachers from two directions that are telling them, you've got Jesus, that's great, but that's not enough.

You need more than just Jesus. You need something else in your life in order for you to live the full, abundant Christian life. Some of them come from a sort of Jewish background, and some of them come from this Gnostic background.

[5 : 42] And as they're misleading the people in Colossae, Paul is writing to them, telling them that they don't need to build anything on the tradition of men or the elementary principles of this world, but instead they need to build their life on Christ.

And I told you that he gave three reasons why they should do that. And the first reason was in verse 9, and that reason was basically because Jesus is the God-man.

He's fully God and fully human. The second reason was in verse 10, and basically that reason is because Jesus is the sufficient, sovereign Lord. Right?

Well, the third reason happens to be verses 11 through 15. So it's kind of a lengthy reason, but if you were to sort of summarize 11 through 15 in one phrase, it's you should build your life on Christ because he is the triumphant Savior.

He is the triumphant Savior. And the reason that the text is a little bit longer than, say, verse 9 and verse 10, is because he shows his victory in two ways.

[6 : 57] Number one that we're going to look at today, verse 11 and 12, it's his triumph in us. And verse 13 through 15 is his triumph by the cross.

And so that idea then helps us as we look at Jesus and we say, why should I build my life on Jesus? Why should Jesus be the one by whom I interpret all of life?

And it's because of what he has done in Christians to triumph in their life, to bring victory into their life. And we want to kind of grapple with these things.

And I know that it may be that you have experienced someone coming to you telling you that you need to live the abundant Christian life. And there is truth in that idea, but most of the time, when it comes from certain quarters, it gets mixed with all kinds of difficulty.

As a matter of fact, many people end up sort of boiling down what they're meaning by this as living in such a way as to have the power of positive thinking. It's that sort of old way of talking about the name it and claim it kind of idea, or even the more ancient cult that's been popularized by people like Oprah in this book called The Secret by Rhonda Byron that deals with the idea of the law of attraction.

[8 : 29] That is that the negative things that I think, the negative things that I say, draw to me negative things. The positive things that I think, and the positive things that I say and claim, then draw to me those positive things.

And for many people, they've picked up on this, brought it into the Christian church, and said that you need to tell yourself that you can have your best life now, but you have to stop having negative thinking, and you have to have positive thinking.

And of course, close to 45,000 people every weekend hear that same message in Lakewood Church every weekend. That's double the size of Kerrville.

I just want you to just get that in your mind for a second. That's an amazing amount of people being misled. Christians, we need to build our lives upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because the victory and the abundant life and the triumphant Christian life is found in Christ alone. In Christ alone. And that's what verse 11 and 12 are about.

[9 : 36] But for us to understand it, we need to see two things. The problem and the solution. And then I'm going to tie this all together for us. Okay? So, we're going to go traipsing through the problem and the solution.

It's not going to sound like we're getting anywhere. Hold on with me. I think you'll get it. I hope. And I'm praying that you will. So, let's talk about the problem.

The problem is this idea of circumcision. We're just going to have to talk about it. Okay? And in the Old Testament, circumcision was sort of understood on two levels.

First of all, it was understood in a physical way. It was given to Abraham and it was supposed to be a sign that was given to all of the males in his family as a sign that they're a part of the covenant community.

They were supposed to give it to every male child when they were eight days old. Somebody who was not a genetic Jew, but who believed that the God of Israel was the true God, could come into Israel and become a part of the religion, but they would have to undergo circumcision.

[10 : 51] Okay? They had to cut the male organ and that was then a sign that they were a part of the covenant community. So every man who was in this covenant community had this sign applied to them.

Every mother who changed a diaper was reminded of this sign of the covenant community. And every wife who was intimate with her husband was reminded of this sign of this covenant community so that everybody remembered we have been promised off to God and we are a part of His people and His sign is upon us.

Now that's the physical part. But there was a spiritual understanding of this sign of circumcision as well. And the spiritual aspect was that the physical pointed to the need of a spiritual circumcision.

A circumcision of the heart. In Deuteronomy chapter 10 verse 16 God tells them so circumcise your heart. Stiffen your neck no longer.

In other words every man in the community could have a circumcised body but only those that the Spirit had worked on really had a circumcised heart.

[12 : 12] So you could be a part of the covenant community and not really be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ or in God. Do you understand what I'm saying? In other words the community was mixed between those who were saved and those who were lost.

That's what that Old Testament community was. And this uncircumcised heart was a hardened heart. It was a heart that was not tender and responsive and open to the Lord.

It was a heart that was rebellious and prideful. So they were to circumcise their heart.

one of the things that we need to do as we think about this is we need to understand fully what we mean what we mean when we're saying that a person has an uncircumcised heart a person has a hard heart a person has a darkened heart and I think a good way to do this is to run to Romans chapter 8 and we're going to look at verse 5 through 8 just briefly and as we read this just listen and I'll throw this in a little sort of like amplified reading of this so you can kind of understand what's being said here.

He says in verse 5 for those who are according to the flesh i.e. with uncircumcised heart they set their minds on the things of the flesh but those who are according to the spirit the things of the spirit for the mind set on the flesh or the person with an uncircumcised heart their mind is set upon death but the mind set upon the spirit is life and peace because the mind set on the flesh or the uncircumcised heart is hostile toward God for it does not subject itself to the law of God for it is not even able to do so and those who are in the flesh those with uncircumcised hearts cannot please God.

[14 : 19] Hopefully you can see what we're saying here that basically lost people somebody with an uncircumcised heart is somebody who is lost somebody who's not a Christian and a lost person they have a mind for only fleshly things they have a mind that's set on death they have a mind that's hostile toward God they have a mind that says that they refuse to subject themselves to the law of God as a matter of fact lost people cannot subject themselves to the law of God and in verse 8 he says they have no ability to please God at all and what the Bible is doing is that it's using this imagery of this uncircumcised heart that in other places talks about a hard heart or a heart of stone it's someone who does not want God it's someone who doesn't want to obey God it's something where they don't even please him and what

Paul is saying in Colossians back in verse 11 he says in him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands he's saying your condition is this because your condition used to be this you used to be uncircumcised and heart and we know he means the heart because it's a circumcision made without hands he says you are this but you once were this they once had a hard heart they once were fleshly they once were lost without Christ they once had this stony heart and the end of that was eternal punishment before the Lord so that's the problem what does that have to do with false teachers well if you start with the wrong problem your solution isn't going to fix it look at the world around you look at the reports look at the news reports look at what's going on in this world things like people just running by and shoving down elderly people to the ground stealing from them kicking them look at the abortion of babies because people just don't want to have a newborn look at this idea of chopping off body parts in order to feel better about yourself here's the question is the problem economic do these people just lack the opportunity and the chance to earn a decent salary and if they were to earn that then things could be changed and different for them is their problem educational they've just never had an opportunity to get a solid good full education so if we could educate them then we could see these things disappear in our society is the problem social they've never had a chance to assimilate properly into society and if we could just give them that chance and these things could disappear from our society no no no no the problem is that we have sin sick hearts we have hard hearts humanity has hearts that hate

God that rejects God's rule and nothing short of a supernatural miraculous spiritual transformation called salvation nothing short of that will fix the problem something inside the person must change and the solution is to have that heart circumcised to have it changed so what this does for us is it helps us to interpret life rightly it helps us to look out there and when we hear nations attacking nations when we see lawmakers embezzling money using their positions to steal when we see husbands taking the lives of their wives when we see students attacking teachers when we see all of these things then we immediately have a good and right and godly biblical understanding of the situation and that is humanity has a hard heart that hates

God and hates to follow his rule in other words no one is good no not one and that's what makes God so love the world so amazing because he loved a world full of people with hard hearts he loved a world full of people with sin sick hearts he loved a world with hearts that were darkened with hearts that hated him he loved that world and sent his son so that those who believe in him could have eternal life and not perish and that really is the choice for you today between perishing and eternal life and so which will you choose so that's the problem let's talk about the solution then let's talk about the solution we're going to go back and read verse 11 and 12 and let me just slow down the reading of this just so we can capture it right verse 11 says in him you were also circumcised so this in him that's

Christ Jesus so this circumcision of the heart that the Colossians experienced happened when they became in Christ when they were united with him when they trusted him it was at their conversion we're going to see that more and more as we go it was in him that they were circumcised and it was a circumcision made without hands in other words a spiritual circumcision not a physical circumcision and it's in the removal of the body of the flesh that is it's getting rid of that which is contrary to God it's getting rid of that sinful aspect it's getting rid of that part that has its mind set upon death it's getting rid of that part that refuses to submit itself to God it's the old man and we will come back to that in a second and it says that this happens by the circumcision of Christ now what you don't need to read that as is by the circumcision that happened to

[21 : 48] Christ instead it's by the circumcision that Christ does Christ is the one who does this circumcision of the heart Christ is the one who comes and he works in our hearts and takes away the hard heart and gives us the heart of flesh that leaves us with the question how does he do this verse 12 answers that question having been buried with him in baptism in which you were also raised up with him through faith in the working of God who raised him from the dead how did Jesus do this how does Jesus circumcise a heart well first of all this this removal of the hard hearts our uncircumcised hearts Jesus does this verse 12 tells us having been buried with him in baptism now let's just clear some cobwebs up for just a second oftentimes and I think most of the times when we see the word baptism in the

New Testament we think to ourselves water baptism but there is the concept and the idea of spirit baptism my sermon today is not going to try to delineate all of that and get into all of that we just can't you just need to understand it's there one day we'll preach on that and I'll prove it to you and show you that I'm right now you're just going to have to take it on faith and trust me right but here's the way you can read this okay when you're reading the bible and you see the word baptism if the context seems to have some sort of idea of people doing things typically it's going to be water baptism but if the context is speaking theologically you've got lots of theology about salvation doctrine about you know the inner man this kind of thing it's not talking about water baptism it's talking about spirit baptism which happens at your conversion okay it happens at your conversion so when he says that

Christ circumcises our heart having been buried with him through baptism the point is that when we were buried with Christ that is the same thing as the heart being circumcised so think about it this way completely different analogy okay forget about circumcision for just a second and think about being dead and alive we are said that we are dead scriptures tell us in Ephesians that we're dead in our trespasses and sins a person who's lost is spiritually dead and what they need is to be made alive they go from death to life we sing a song right that at the end of it says i once was lost but now i'm found right i once was blind but now i see i once was uncircumcised now i'm circumcised i once buried in baptism and now i'm raised in baptism right now baptism captures both parts of it right we were buried with him in baptism raised to walk in newness of life the reason we baptize the way we do is to image forth the realities of what's going on here that your dead man is gone that your old man is gone that the flesh resurrection life you don't have resurrection power you are now one in christ a new creation so what what paul is telling us is that we have this problem of our sinful hearts and it is solved by god the father giving to us faith that believes and unites us to christ so that his death is our death his burial is our burial!

the old man is gone the resurrection is our resurrection and so we have been buried with him and we're raised to walk in newness of life that all happens at your conversion happens at your conversion so here's really the question do you christian do you christian still struggle with a besetting sin with sin that so easily entangles you do you still struggle with that so for instance perhaps maybe you still struggle with anger or maybe you still struggle with despairing thoughts or maybe you struggle with lust or maybe you struggle with greed or maybe you struggle to respond in faith to suffering that comes to you there are some people who want to tell you that it's your dad's fault and that what you need to do is just break away from your dad there's some who want to tell you that it's your genetics and therefore you just need to accept yourself for who you are there's some who say it's a chemical imbalance and you need psychotropic drugs the

Colossians were told listen you you physically circumcised so that!

[27 : 36] I need something in my life what's going on and these false teachers are saying go get this some of them were telling them listen go worship angels you go worship angels and that angel is going to help you deal with the suffering that you go through in this life you're still struggling with despairing thoughts then you need to learn the secret of the ages that your body doesn't really exist and the suffering that you're going through is not real because you're just a spirit being anyway paul comes along and he says no listen the change that you need the thing that you need to be able to fight against the temptation to sin the despair and suffering and the troubles of this life the thing that you need you already have in christ when christ came he killed the old man and buried it you are now a new creature in christ all you need to live a life of godliness is christ himself this is what peter is talking about in second peter chapter one he's saying that his divine power has granted to us everything that pertains to life and godliness through the true knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and excellence everything for life everything for life everything for life and godliness god's granted to you everything for both of those through the true knowledge of the one who called you to his own glory and excellence you don't need an extra circumcision an extra baptism you don't need any kind of you know uh thing from this world you don't need worship of angels you don't need this other thing all you need is christ now how that gets worked out specifically is where chapter three of colossians goes and we'll talk about how that gets worked out specifically but for today let's just think about it this way imagine someone born blind they've never seen a day in their life all of a sudden they wake up one day with 20 20 vision now up to this point in their life they've had a lot of help when it comes to food they make sure that they've got their food set in the right way their plate is set with food at 12 3 and 9 o'clock certain things or maybe at 6 o'clock when it comes to getting ready in the morning toiletries are always in the same place at the same height in the same container so they can find what it is they're looking for making their way around the house this involves canes and hands and bumps into small things making sure they know the pathway that they're in sometimes things are moved and kept in such a way so they never have to relearn that but imagine sight all of a sudden bursting into their mind they wake up able to see now they don't have to have somebody fix their own plate they can fix their own plate now they don't have to have someone make sure the toiletries are good and make sure their hair is nice they can look at it themselves and they can see it they don't have to use the wall to find their way around the house but what if you looked at them and they were walking around with using their cane still you can see can't you yes why are you still using your cane part of it is because they're just not used to such sight the habits of the old life are there and they're just constantly still doing them

and every now and then they still run back to them because they don't understand maybe what they're seeing but the point is is that we as sinners used to live a certain way because sin made us live that way our own sin our own flesh I'm not blaming somebody else it's us and we were subject to it and we had to live life a certain way but if you have been saved if you have been rescued by Christ then you once were blind but now you see and the thing to living life the way we ought to live is that you just got to get used to seeing you don't have to you don't have to be subject to the struggle of sin and temptation anymore without hope there is hope I mean we're not going to be totally free from sin and temptation because now it has declared war on us but you have all the resources you need in Christ to fight and to grow in your walk so what are some things we need to do as we come to the end of this sermon

I got a couple of four things that I want to say here's what needs to happen if this is true if what Paul is saying is that to live the abundant Christian life means all you need is Christ then number one you need to get saved there are a lot of people who call themselves Christians and they just do lip service to Christ but they must be born again you need to check your heart you need to ask yourself if you're still dead in your sins you need to ask yourself if you still have a stony hard heart uncircumcised and rebellious to the Lord and if so then you need to turn repent of your sin and trust in Christ second if you're a Christian now this is going to sound a little bit out but like here's the thing when we talk about the spirit baptism there in Colossians 2.12 the reason we do physical water baptism is that it serves as a reminder to the person who is being baptized of all the promises of God for them in other words every person who trusts Christ ought to be baptized because it helps them understand all that God has done for them that they have once been dead but now have been raised they once had an uncircumcised heart but now it has been circumcised they once were lost but now they're found they once were blind but now they see and that baptism helps to portray to them to preach to them to tell to them like a good sermon or an uplifting song or partaking of the Lord's Supper

God has saved you and all the promises of God are on you and you belong to Him water baptism is a glorious thing for the one being baptized because as you were raised once you're baptized once and so some of you I would say to you hey if you haven't been then think about it third thing I would say if you're tempted to think that maybe your life doesn't have that sort of spiritual vitality that you wish that it did then maybe you look at other Christians and you see them and you think to yourself wow there's a Christian that seems to really be you know I mean they seem to be on fire for the Lord you look at your own relationship and you wonder man why why don't I have that kind of relationship with the Lord let me just remind you that you have all that you need for such a relationship in Christ now why would I say this

I had a friend of mine we sat down oh gosh this was 20 something years ago he was a assembly of God pastor and he was concerned for me and so we wanted to talk and we got into talking about issues of spirit baptism and all these things and I won't bore you with all the details but in the end one of the things he said to me he says listen I know that you love the Lord and I know that you're studying the word and I believe that you're a Christian but you can have more you could have a better Christian life you could have more of God and his answer to me was for me to follow these things that he wanted me to do that scripture never tells us is going to give us what he said it was going to give me and it's really easy for people well meaning Christians who think that they've discovered a secret to come to you and say hey listen you want a more vital vibrant

[36 : 35] Christian life than do XYZ and I'm telling you you have everything you need in Christ you have everything you need in Christ God is not holding out on you you haven't missed some secret thing you're not a second class Christian you just need to get used to having sight and put down the cane the fourth and final thing is this if you face troubles of suffering in this life and you wonder is there something more that you should be doing to face those sufferings the answer is that all you need is to realize Christ has already changed the course of your life from the greatest most horrific suffering of all hell and he has not stopped working in you to help you live in the sight that he has given you what are we to do as Christians then he's already given us circumcised hearts that are tender and responsive to the Lord so we take advantage of that tender heart read the word looking for the greatness of God pray with a heart tender towards the Lord longing to connect with him longing to just spend time in his presence beseeching him laying out your heart before him fellowship with other believers who will give you permission to hold them accountable attend to the preaching of the word and listen for what

God's word says participate in Bible studies so that you learn more of who God is and trust that you have everything you need in Christ let's pray