

# Jesus Brings Life

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let's turn back to the chapter we had, Colossians chapter 2. Colossians chapter 2. We can read again from verses 12 down to verse 15.

Verse 12 to 15. Having been buried with him in baptism, in which you also were raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead, and you who were dead in your trespasses and are in circumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.

This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in him.

When I first moved to Edinburgh at the start of my time at ETS, I received a few letters from addressed to the previous occupant of the flat.

So, of course, I just wrote in the back, that he no longer lives in the flat, and posted them back where they came from. Next week, a few more letters. Week after that, a few more letters.

[ 1 : 22 ] I just kept posting them back and posting them back, until one day I had a knock on my door at half seven on a Sunday morning. I thought, this is not normal. So I went to the door, and I opened the door, and there is two, I'm not small, but two men bigger than me in black jackets and ties, thinking, this is not good.

And we said, hello, mister, and the man's name and letters. We're here to collect the debt of £15,000. Well, I had to explain to them, had to prove to them, had to get my passport out, which I thankfully had with me, because I'd flown out to the flat at that time, and it took two, three hours to prove to them that I wasn't this man, that I didn't owe £15,000, and that I have never been with the company they were claiming the money for.

It was a shocking day, a shocking week for me. I think I was in shock for days, or not weeks afterwards. It was a frightening moment. I was thinking, even more frightening if I knew the debt was mine.

Even more frightening if I was waiting for that knock on the door. This passage today, we have mentioned to us a debt that we all once owed, and that some of us still owe.

As we'll look at this passage, at these few verses, we'll come to see what this debt means, and how this debt is paid, and what happens if this debt is not paid for.

[ 2 : 55 ] We're carrying on, like we said, in our series in Colossians, looking at how in Jesus we are safe and secure. Last week, we set the foundations. We saw how Jesus is Lord over his creation, and Lord over his church.

How that astonishes us, that we worship the God who is over all things. Well, today we come to chapter 2, and come to our verses here, mostly in verses 13 down to 15, and we can see that here we have another wonderful reality shown to us about Jesus, that he is Lord and sovereign, but also that he is the one who has given us life.

As we look at verse 13 down to 15, briefly looking at it in three ways. First of all, looking at how in Jesus we have life, then how in Jesus we have forgiveness, and then how in Jesus we have victory. Before we get there, we can start by looking just quickly at the end of verse 12. We see that this section here, starting chapter 2, down to verse 12, verse 13, it's all based on one thing.

It's based on the resurrection of Jesus. Because he was raised, in verse 12, it means we were raised with him, and we touched on this last Wednesday, so I won't go into it again just now, but last Wednesday we saw how in Jesus' resurrection, it means that we have our hope, our sure and certain hope, that because God raised him from the dead, that hope is for all Christians too.

[ 4 : 36 ] All that we're about to say, all that Paul is about to remind these Christians of in Colossae, it's all based on the fact that Jesus rose again. It all relies on that simple, wonderful reality.

That brings us to the start here in verse 13, where Paul reminds these Christians in Colossae of who and of what they once were, and Paul is clear.

He doesn't spend too many words to say something simple. He says it straight to them, and you who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh.

Paul is not afraid to remind them, to tell them what they once were and who they once were. But a reminder that before Jesus, they had no hope.

But before Jesus, they were spiritually dead. We should never deny what we once were. Not for a second am I saying we should make much of it.

[ 5 : 47 ] Not for a second am I saying we should make that the big testimony, but we should never deny, never shy away from what we once were, what our past once was.

Because that shows then that God took us from that and made us new. That God took us from that dead, spiritual deadness, and that he's given us life.

Not saying that because of my effort, because of my work, I am now this, but saying I was once this. You were once dead. I was once dead spiritually, but now I am alive.

I am free and alive in Jesus. Again, Paul uses simple words here. You were dead. Not struggling. Not waiting for a helping hand. You were completely dead. Helpless beyond human help. Beyond any human intervention whatsoever.

[ 6 : 48 ] Ever. I have a feeling last time I was with you, well, last year, maybe two years ago now, we touched partly on this verse in reference to another section of Scripture, and I brought up the reality that I love that poem, the footprints in the sand poem.

I do. I have it. I have my granny's copy of it framed on my wall, but it's not quite true, is it? That footprint poem tells us that the hard times in our life, that's when Jesus carries us.

Well, no, he carries us all the time. The common perception today is that Christianity is just a helping hand, that Jesus comes and makes good people better, or he comes and reinvents your life for you, whatever else people say.

But Jesus doesn't come to help us. He comes to give us life. We were dead, and now in Jesus, we are alive.

This should encourage us as we deal with friends and family members who are not yet saved, those who we love and those who we care for deeply and who we wish to see saved, but we can't understand why they just don't get it.

[ 8 : 04 ] But why don't they want to know this salvation? Why don't they want this help? Why don't they want to know the Jesus who we love and care for so much? Why are they so careless about him? And this verse reminds us it's because spiritually they are dead.

Spiritually they are dead, and spiritually they need not encouragement, not just nice words, they need life from Jesus. New life, and only Jesus can give that to them.

Our job is to point them to Jesus again and again and again, point them to the only one who can give them life. Dead in our trespasses, through our sin, through our sin nature we're born into, and through our own continual sin, adding to that and adding to that, we were helpless.

We were worshipping our gods, worshipping idols, worshipping ourselves, worshipping anything and everything, yet also how they became alive in Jesus. That should encourage us as we look to our own families, our own friends, that those who we think we have just no hope for, that Jesus can bring them to life too.

Again, any here today, I don't know your situation, I really don't. Any here today who as of yet don't know Jesus as your saviour, there is life for you today too in Jesus. Don't take my word for it, read it yourself, listen to God's word yourself.

[ 9 : 33 ] Dead in trespasses, dead in sin, they can do nothing to revive themselves. The darkness of sin just growing and growing and growing, and that's who they once were, that's what they once were.

Dead also in the uncircumcision of their flesh. That reference to uncircumcision, that reference of course referring back to those in the Old Covenant, in the Old Testament who were outside of Israel, those who were outside of a promise of God, those who had not only no hope, but also no reference, no idea of who to hope in, those who were outside the camp.

And Paul's saying, you weren't just dead in sins, you were outside the camp completely. You had no idea even who to look to for help. You had nothing, no one. All in all, Paul's using these illustrations, this imagery, to make clear to them, to remind them that once you were dead, completely, spiritually helpless, no hope, no kind of self-improvement would work, no nice words would help, no five-week holidays would help.

You were dead, hopeless, helpless, gone. And that's important that Paul lays this foundation because then he brings in the wonderful truth, the wonderful truth that before they were once helplessly dead, but now they are unchangeably alive.

God made alive together with him, with Jesus. God has given you life. For the Christians here, God has given you life.

[ 11 : 21 ] Yes, you were once dead. Yes, you were once hopelessly lost, but now we are, you are, and we are unchangeably alive in Jesus. Not just surviving, but alive, alive.

A complete transformation took place in the lives of these Christians. They were once taken from idol-worshipping pagans and Gentiles. They would now be able to call Jesus their Lord.

And the wording there to be made alive, there's a sense there of real ongoing, a real ongoing life. Paul could have used other words, but through the Spirit he used this word, which implies something which happened once but has ongoing consequences.

You were made alive in Jesus and now you live in him, live with him, live through him. It's ongoing life for all of his people.

It's all in Jesus. We can notice that too. God made alive together with him or in him. We had this last week.

[ 12 : 31 ] This is a theme we'll have as we go through these chapters. All of it, all that we have, all that we know, it's all in and through Jesus and in and through him alone.

Our sure hope for our resurrection rests in his resurrection. It's the same for our life. Because he lives, we can be sure that we also will live.

Because he lives forever, we can be sure that we as his people will live forever. forever. I'd be saying, well, you can say that, can't you?

Up there, you can say that. You can say that quite easily. You don't know my situation. You don't know my struggles. You don't know how hard life is for me. I don't.

That doesn't change the promise of God's word to his people. That promise that he has made us alive in Jesus. That life is sure. That life is promised.

[ 13 : 38 ] That life will never be taken away from his people because that life rests in our ever-living Savior. Jesus brings life to his people.

Unchangeably, we're given life. Eternally, we are given life. Out of his love for his people, he has given us life.

For those here today who are without Jesus, of those who are watching, or who may watch, who are yet without Jesus, then there is no pleasure in saying this, but the reality is you are not in life. You are still stuck, continually stuck in a cycle at the start of verse 13. Still dead in your trespasses, still dead in your sins, still looking for something, some way out.

And until you find, until you realize the second half of verse 13, until you find life in Jesus, you will never, ever find life anywhere else.

[ 14 : 50 ] But verse 13 gives us hope, real hope. But who is Jesus for? Is it for those who try and live a good life? Is he for those who try and become Christians really hard?

Is he for those who have lived a life that looks good? Is he for those who know their scripture inside out? Is he for those who have been to church for years? Is he for those who have Christian parents, a Christian lineage?

No. Verse 13 reminds us that he gives life to those who are dead. That's the requirement. Are you dead in your sins? Are you lost in your sins?

Then Jesus is for you. Come and know Jesus. Come and know real life.

So Jesus gives life from death to life. Then we see a second half of verse 13 into verse 14. We see that Jesus brings forgiveness.

[ 15 : 53 ] Total and eternal forgiveness for all our trespasses and all our sins. Paul uses such specific words here and through the spirit inspiring him these words are important for us to understand.

God made alive together with him having forgiven us all our trespasses. All. That word is not just there to fill in space.

It's there for a reason. that reminder to these people, these Christians, these dear brothers and sisters in Colossae and the dear brothers and sisters here today that God has forgiven you of all your sins.

But when God looks on you, dear brother, dear sister, who or what does he see? He sees one, as we see here, who has been declared righteous, declared, forgiven, and perfected through the sacrifice of his son.

We know this off by heart. We've heard it a thousand times, but hear it again. God does not look on his people today with a frowning providence, as Thomas Watson would say.

[17:05] He doesn't look down on us and frowns. He looks down on us in love. Perhaps next week I'll get a link to that sermon from Thomas Watson, a great sermon he preached in his last sermons about the frowning providence of God and how our life may be hard, our situation may be hard, but if we're in Jesus, then God looks on us in love.

That's a reminder we have here, this simple phrasing of verse 13. All has been forgiven, all our trespasses of all his people.

He doesn't look down on his people and see those who he still has some form of wrath against. He looks down on his people and we have the sure hope of this again, again, scripture, in love because he looks down on his people through his son.

all the wrath has been cleared, all the wrath, all the punishment has been taken onto the shoulders of our Saviour.

We'll see that in a second. Because that's true, we can relax and rely in verse 13 and trust and hope in verse 14 that God has forgiven his people of all their sins.

[18:37] But when we approach God, when we approach him in our lives, when we approach him in prayer, if we do so as those who know Jesus as our Saviour, that we come before God with the sure and certain knowledge that forgiveness is ours, that Jesus has covered us and because we know that, we can come before God knowing that he sees us and loves us as his precious people.

the Colossians, it was not easy to be a Christian in this place. Like I said, it was a pagan area. These Christians were from pagan backgrounds.

It would not have been easy for them, it wasn't easy for them, they were facing heresy, they were facing outside destruction, they were having a hard time of it. And Paul reminds them that even all this is going on, even when they're facing these awful situations, know that in Jesus and through Jesus, you are completely forgiven of your sins.

The wrath is no longer held against you. How can we know this? Well, Paul then goes on to tell us how we can know this. In verse 14, we see that the debt has been cancelled. God has cancelled the record of debt that stood against us with all its legal demands.

Paul uses this legal language to make so clear to these Christians and to us that the debt has indeed been totally thoroughly cancelled.

[20:15] Unlike that Sunday morning in Leith, this debt was real, this debt was held against us and this debt could never be paid by us.

The debt of our sin against God stood against us, it hung over us and the only payment is eternal death. Eternal wrath is its payment.

Eternity in hell is its payment and that is the situation that we found ourselves in before we were saved. No money, no time, no effort can even begin to change the situation of this debt which once hung over us.

Verse 14 reminds us that this great debt which we could never begin to pay has been cancelled, has been set aside, been paid.

Our name is no longer in the debt book instead, our name is now in the book of life. There in ink that will never be erased. not a part payment but a full payment for our debt.

[21:32] Jesus has paid that debt. If you're here, if you're listening and that weight of sin is still hanging over you this day, it's an awful place to be in.

Every Christian here knows that feeling, how awful it is to have that weight of sin still hanging over you, that debt still unpaid and you cannot pay it. Jesus has.

Come and trust in Jesus and rely on him, the one who has done all the work so that debt can be paid. Trust in him and know that you will have full forgiveness with the father.

His precious blood has paid that debt which we can never and will never be able to pay for ourselves. The demands have been met, the legal demands have been met by him. Then we see the price of the payment. The debt has been paid by Jesus, paid by his blood. What a price, what a price to pay this debt.

[ 22 : 42 ] See that the final section, the final phrase at the end of verse 14, talking about the debt this he, God, set aside, nailing it to the cross.

For our debt to be paid, our Lord, our Saviour, the second person of the Trinity, the eternal Son of God, had to come down to his creation and be humiliated from beginning to end.

A life of constant humiliation, a life of constant shame, of constant shame, hanging over him, each day walking closer and closer and closer to the cross, knowing full well what lay ahead of him.

The humiliation of our Saviour, but also we see that he had to pay that final and ultimate sacrifice.

We see that in this phrase, that the debt is cancelled, but it's cancelled because it was nailed to the cross.

the death of our Saviour on that cross, as he hung there, we are seeing our debt being cancelled in front of us.

[ 23 : 56 ] And Paul is bringing these Colossian Christians back to this wonderful reminder that they are free, set free from this debt because it was nailed to the cross.

Because their Saviour hung there for them and for you, dear Christian. for our sake, he made him to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

On that cross, our Saviour hung there. He was made to be sin. The full wrath of the Father poured out onto him, all to pay our debt.

on that cross, the altogether holy God poured out his full wrath on sin. What a Saviour we have this day.

The Saviour who gives us life through his own death. Who gives us eternal promise of hope, of eternal life because he now lives forever.

[ 25 : 07 ] wonderful verse in 1 Peter chapter 2 verse 24. Speaking of Jesus, he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

By his wounds you have been healed. life in Jesus, forgiveness, full forgiveness in Jesus and finally we have victory in and through Jesus in verse 15.

In verse 15 Paul ends this section here by fully displaying the full power for Jesus accomplished on the cross. As we look at verse 15 we see the rulers and authorities being brought back in again.

We had them in chapter 1 of Jesus having full dominion over them. These are likely, they are as far as we can know referring to demonic rulers, demonic authorities, to things of darkness which we can't even begin to grasp fully.

That verse Ephesians 6 and verse 12, that reminder that we do not struggle or wrestle against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against authorities, against cosmic powers over this present darkness.

[ 26 : 38 ] In Jesus we see that these powers have been destroyed. Our old masters as it were, they have been disarmed completely. The darkness that once ruled our lives, the dark servants we once served, the master of this world who is Satan who he once was, he has been completely disarmed by the work of our saviour on the cross.

We're just giving a brief glimpse in this verse into the deeper workings of the cross, things that we can't begin to fully grasp. On that cross as Jesus paid the debt of our sin, he was also there disarming, destroying, putting his enemies to shame.

victory is seen for Satan as Jesus hung there, as a second person of the Godhead, the son, the eternal son in human flesh, as he hung there, Satan and his demons gathered round, perhaps rejoicing.

Finally, God has been defeated as it were, finally, they will have their day. And as Jesus hung there in apparent weakness, his body broken, there's darkness closing around him, we see that on that cross, we see Jesus defeating, disarming these powers, disarming his enemies.

Their moment of greatest perceived victory is actually their moment of downfall. The language used in verse 15 is the same language borrowing of phrases at the time which would be used to describe Roman emperors, Roman emperors in victory.

[ 28 : 30 ] We find the same verse changed a wee bit in secular writings of the time describing Roman emperors, how he disarmed and destroyed the countries and the people groups that they

ruled over.

Well, here Paul is saying, what these emperors do on earth, our Jesus has done to the uttermost. He has fully disarmed the darkness and the rulers and authorities that were against him. Because he's defeated them, his people are no longer under their control. What is seen as weakness is actually triumph. But as we see our saviour in this verse nailed to that tree, we see him triumphing over sin, triumphing over Satan, dealing that death blow over Satan, that death blow that was prophesied and predicted at the very start of creation, that one would come who would what? One would come who would destroy the serpent, who would step on the head of the serpent, and here on the cross we see that taking place. Last week we saw the lordship of Jesus over all things. His lordship, as we see here in verse 16 in chapter 1, the lordship over all thrones and dominions and authorities, well here we see that lordship taking full effect.

[ 29 : 53 ] On that cross we don't see a weak and powerless saviour. On that cross we see Jesus, our high king, our servant king, our conquering king, defeating his enemies.

Our old masters are destroyed, they are also shamed. they are put to open shame. But all their great power is nothing compared to the power of our suffering saviour.

This is not just nice words for us, this is God's holy word and as we worship today and as we go about our week ahead of us, as we face darkness and face these situations and face perhaps in some of our situations even face the darkness of spiritual darkness and spiritual warfare, we have to understand and remind ourselves that we are under the cover, under the protection, washed in the blood of the one who has overcome these things.

As we face spiritual warfare, as we face spiritual darkness, let's turn to him, the one who has defeated these enemies for us. On our own, we can't fight them.

On our own, we have no power against them, but through him, we have power. Through him, we have the full hope, the full assurance, the full promise that he has defeated all these enemies, that they have been destroyed.

[ 31 : 24 ] That final phrase reminds us of that. He had disarmed them by what? By triumphing, by triumphing over them in Jesus. And our saviour on that cross, the world saw a poor man broken down.

The Romans saw a Jew who had lost his mind. The Jews, many of the Jews saw a blasphemer. We see our saviour conquering death, paying for the sins of his people.

We see our saviour completely, eternally victorious. We see our saviour hanging there out of obedience to the Father out of love for his people.

All through Jesus. To bring this to a close section, this chapter, we close with this wonderful reminder that he has triumphed over them, over our greatest enemies, over death itself.

And this week where death has spoken so clearly in this community, in so many sad situations and in so many ways which breaks our hearts, we have this wonderful reminder that in and through Jesus, he has defeated death itself.

[ 32 : 50 ] If we trust in him, have our hope in him, then just as he defeated death, so shall we. Because he reigns victorious, we will be his people with him forever. Because our king now reigns forever, the right hand of the Father, one day we will join and be with him.

In Jesus, we have victory, forgiveness, and eternal life. Let's bow our heads in a word of prayer.

Lord God, we come before you again and we thank you for your word.

Lord, we thank you for the privilege of being able to read your word together. We thank you that we have the promise that your word does not return to you void. As it goes out to your people, it goes out to the nations, we see hearts and minds and lives being changed.

We do pray today that as we have reminded ourselves of a great wonder that we worship our risen saviour who has claimed total victory over all his enemies. As we worship a saviour who has provided full forgiveness for all his people, Lord, that we would understand that for ourselves.

Lord, forgive me for anything I said that was not in accordance of your word. Lord, we give you praise as always that the power is not in the jars of clay who stand here, Lord, the power is in you and in your living word.

[ 34 : 07 ] Would you pray for any here today who as of yet don't know you, Lord, they would know what it is to worship King Jesus. They would know what it is to look at that man on the cross and to see in that sacrifice the saviour of their souls, the one who is now king for all time, the one who is now victorious over all his enemies, Lord, that you would draw them to yourself.

Pray for all your people here today, Lord, that you would encourage us through your word, bless us through your word, bless us and encourage us as we remind ourselves of who it is we worship, of how amazing he is, of how wonderful he is, of all his great work towards us, of all his love towards people, that he would hang on that cross for us, that he would live that life for us, he would die for us, that he would now reign forevermore for his people.

Lord, encourage us and be with us, as God always sings, in and through and for our precious saviour's name. Amen. Let's conclude our time together by singing again from God's word or hearing God's word being sung to us from Psalm 100.

Again, Scottish Psalter, Psalm 100. Psalm 100.

He doth us take. The song of victory, the song of praise, as we join together and praise our victorious saviour. So let's sing together in our hearts.

[ 36 : 01 ] Psalm 100. Psalm 101. All people that want to do well, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice, in service the retreat onield, all people with high place, Know that the Lord is all in thee, With our heart in thee in our sin, With our best hope he loved us be.

And for his sheep we come to sin. For enter and his gates with praise, The cross with dry his heart unto, Praise God and bless his name always, For it is simply so true.

Amen. Amen.

Again, just an encouragement to please keep the Monroe and the Murray families in your prayers tonight and this week and in the weeks to come.

Let's close in a word of prayer. Lord God, we come before you. Lord, we thank you for the day you've given us. This day set apart to worship you. Lord, help us as we carry on this day, as we go back to our homes, Lord, to do so, Understanding that you are with us.

[ 38 : 59 ] You are the God who has made and who knows your people. Lord, help us this new week to praise you well. Help us this new week to go forward in your strength, To go forward in your boldness, Proclaiming the good news of Jesus.

Lord, keep us safe. Lord, humble us, keep us close to you. We ask for comfort for your mourning people. We ask for help for all those who cry out to you.

Lord, be close to every one of us. Bless us, Lord, and encourage us in our walks with you. Ask all these things, as always, in the precious name of our Saviour. Amen.