

The Sufficiency of Christ

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[0 : 00] All right, good morning. Thank you, Jade. I appreciate that. I thought the problem was you hearing me, but apparently not. So, all right. So, as you may or may not know, the book of Colossians actually happens to be one of my favorite books in all of the New Testament.

A couple of reasons for it is, and just as Dave kind of alluded to it, it just talks about the supremacy of Jesus Christ, right? That's why that is who we worship, and it's a powerful, potent book that is full of rich theology.

Now, this morning, I want to talk to you about a question that I'm going to guess most of you have asked at one point or another in your life.

And that question is simply, is there anything more I need for my salvation? Is there anything more I need for my salvation?

Anybody ask something about that or a question like that? Like, am I really forgiven? Has anybody ever actually asked that question? Right? Yep. Can God forgive me? Right?

[1 : 09] Is there, look at this, we got even the young ones in the back answering. I love it. You know, the question that usually comes up is, sometimes we're in a rough patch, we're doubting there's a struggle going on, and then we start thinking, maybe I need something more.

Maybe there's something I need to add to my testimony or my Christian faith that would somehow enhance it and help me to be mature.

Okay? Now, I don't want you to feel out of place by having you answer that question because the church of Colossae, which this letter is addressed to, asked those very same questions.

They had some of those questions. And what happens is, they kind of reached out to Paul because they had these questions about their salvation. And I'll give you a little bit of the context of the book. The book is written, like I said, to a group of saints that were located in modern-day Turkey in a city called Colossae, which actually doesn't even exist anymore.

[2 : 19] Paul's never met them. Paul's never visited them. But he knows them because there's this guy by the name of Epaphras who we believe was in Ephesus.

And you guys know Ephesus, the book of Ephesians. Paul spent more than one missionary journey there, but he also pastored there for about three years. So we believe that this man Epaphras heard Paul share this gospel, the good news about Jesus Christ.

And as Dave read in the text today, he went back home. He shared it with his friends and family. And what happened? They believed. And as they came together, they formed a church and they grew.

And as they were growing, remember, they didn't have this whole New Testament before him. So what they would do is they would get these letters or teachers that Paul would send out to help different churches at different stages to become healthy and grow.

So finally, Paul's in prison in Rome at this point, and he writes this letter to these dear saints. And he sends it back with this man Epaphras who brought their questions to him.

[3 : 24] So as you heard what Dave read to you this morning, those were the facts of the gospel. I don't even want to say the facts of the gospel is so impersonal. It was the ultimate good news of Jesus Christ and what Jesus Christ did for them.

It's beautiful. Okay? So he brought them this good news because the root question that we ask, right, is am I missing something?

Right? We've asked that. For some of you, I can personally attest, you might be missing a few screws. But you yourselves might be asking, do I really have everything that I need to live this Christian life?

Have I truly been given everything that I need to live this Christian life? Like you believe that Jesus promises you salvation if you put your faith in him.

But is there anything more? Has anybody asked that question? You can nod. Yeah, right? Is there anything more? Is there anything more that I need to do?

[4 : 32] Because you know that we have to grow into maturity, but sometimes it just doesn't seem to be happening fast enough. Or for some of us, it just doesn't seem to happen at all.

And we wonder and we struggle and we worry that maybe I'm missing something. Maybe when I first believe in Jesus, someone was supposed to tell me something more.

You guys remember, and you guys will remember records. You guys remember records? They're making a comeback now, right? Now, if you guys haven't used a record, you'd put it on a machine, it turns the record, and you'd have the needle.

And one thing that would often happen is if your record got scratched, the needle would skip. You guys remember that? And if the groove went upwards, it would keep repeating the same line over and over, right?

You know, she loves me, yeah, yeah. She loves me, yeah, yeah. You know, just, it would just keep playing that whole thing. And you'd have to get up and you'd pick up the needle and move it over.

[5 : 41] Well, that's how some of us live our Christian lives. It's just the same thing, same struggle over and over. And you desire to get over that skip, but there's this skip there.

There's this scratch that you just can't figure out what to do with it. Well, I've got some good news for you.

Paul answers those questions, and he answers these very questions in this book that we happen to see before us. So there's three areas that I believe that Christians get stuck in more often than not. These three areas are they have a poor understanding of their salvation or an incomplete understanding or a deficient view of their salvation.

There's another area is they have a poor understanding of what forgiveness means. And the third area is they have a poor understanding of what victory in Christ means.

[6 : 48] Now, before I go any further, I've got some good news for you. The good news is at the moment of your salvation, you received everything you will ever need to grow in maturity.

That's the truth. That's the good news. Everything that you will ever need to grow into a mature Christian happens to you at that moment, that point of salvation, when you give your allegiance to Jesus Christ. Amen?

And I'm going to prove this to you. First of all, 2 Peter. The Apostle Peter writes in 2 Peter 1.3, he says, His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness.

Everything that we would ever need happens at that point of salvation through the knowledge of Jesus Christ who called us to his own glory and excellence.

Because that's what salvation is. Jesus Christ calling us to his own glory and excellence. Later on, the Apostle Paul would write in 1 Corinthians 1.30, he says, And because of Jesus, you are in him, Jesus Christ, who became to us wisdom from God.

[8 : 06] And in Jesus, we received righteousness and sanctification and redemption. Paul would later write in Ephesians 1.3, he says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

Amen? He gave us every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. And as we are going to read in a second, For you have been filled with him, Christ Jesus.

So we, these truths are totally preached throughout all of Scripture, but why is it that we doubt? Why is it that we struggle with this knowledge? Why do we struggle with an understanding that there might be something more? And I believe the answer is clear and simple, is we have an enemy.

And his name is Satan. And the reality is, Satan does not want you to believe these truths. Satan wants to distract you from these truths. Satan actually doesn't want you to know God's Word.

[9 : 25] He does not certainly want you to share the good news of Jesus Christ with anyone else. See, the reality is, Satan wants you to feel weak. He wants you to feel foolish, unsettled in your faith.

He wants to remove your joy. And he wants you to feel as if you have no hope. If you have no hope, you have no meaning. If you have no meaning, you have no fulfillment.

If that is where you are, you are exactly where Satan wants you to be. However, I want to share with you where Jesus Christ wants you to be.

I want to be able to provide for you the knowledge that is found in Scripture, which confronts these lies, so that we may live in the freedom of our salvation.

So let's take a look at Colossians chapter 2. And I'm just going to read the section from 6 to 15, but I'm going to primarily concentrate on verses 11 to 15 this morning.

[10:36] If you have an ESV Bible, like just there's a title. It says, Notice, You can't live for Christ if you're not rooted and built up in Jesus.

Amen? You can't just, Hey, I accept him, and then just go your own way, do your own thing. No, no. There's a process, a discipleship process, a growing process. Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

And Paul gives us this warning, 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.

For in Jesus the whole fullness of deity bodily dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.

Verse 11, In him also you were circumcised, with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the 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.

[12:09] And you who were dead in your trespasses, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling 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.

So the question is, is my salvation secure? Do I have complete salvation? Let's take a look at verse 11 and 12 once again.

In him also you were circumcised, with a circumcision made with hands. And I'm going to explain that in a bit. But what he's dealing, he's talking about, he's talking to, okay, I'm going to let the cat out of the bag for you, all right?

What happened was, there's two things that Paul is battling that was affecting the Colossian Christians. One were former Jews, and I mean people who wanted to Judaize Christianity.

[13:20] And then there was another sect of mystic Jews. And they weren't necessarily Jews, but there was a lot of people at that time that believed in all sorts of mystic religions, kind of like today, right?

All these kind of crazy, zingy ideas of faith. And they tried to push that on the people who were now believing in Jesus Christ.

So in him you're also circumcised, with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ. Then 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.

This is an intensely packed couple of verses. So one, the fact is your salvation does not need to be supplemented by anything. Your salvation does not need any baptism, any circumcision.

To be saved, you do not need to see a priest. To be saved, you do not have to do a ritual. You do not have to experience a spiritual vision.

[14:32] And the fact of the matter is, Paul's also saying is, that there's no amount of self-denial or human works which will bring about any type of spiritual benefit for you that leads to your faith.

All right? So before I go any further, I'm going to explain to you the difference between Christianity and every other single religion in the world. You ready? It's really simple.

And when you're talking to someone, this is always an excellent way to bring about a way to share Jesus Christ. Every other religion in the world believes that you have a spark of goodness in you.

That there is something in you that is really good that needs to come out. And the way you bring that spark out is you do good things.

You do religious things. You do stuff on the outside. And if you do, you dress a certain way. You eat the right foods. You do the right, go attend the right festivals.

[15 : 36] You arrange your house in a certain way that will enlighten that spark that is in you and show to the world just what a good person you are.

Okay, you with me on that? That is what every other religion in the world teaches. Now let me tell you what the Bible teaches. Christianity teaches that your heart is actually dead.

It's messed up. There is no good in you. Okay? Doesn't mean you can't do good, nice things. But there's no goodness in you that could earn enough righteousness to save you.

You with me on that one? You can do a lot of goodness to appear good to your neighbors and the people down the street and when your mother-in-law, when she visits. But, I know Lynn's working on that with her mother-in-law here.

Just got to put on the, you know, she's got the I love Donald Trump. Okay, we're good. So what they do is they put on this thing.

[16 : 45] The Bible teaches that we're so dead that we need a new heart. And the only way we can get that heart is if God gives it to us. And the only way that God gives it to us is if we cry mercy.

And we ask Jesus Christ to give us a new heart. Because once we have that new heart, that new heart grows and it begins to change the outside.

So, to sum up quickly, every other religion in the world believes if you work on the outside, it will change the inside. Jesus Christ says, no, no, no, no, no, no, no.

The inside needs to be changed and I'm the only one who can change it. And I go in and I change that heart. And then that power of Jesus Christ changes the outside. You with me on that one?

That's really the difference between every other religion in Jesus Christ.

We don't do works. We pray for God's mercy. Amen. We pray for his strength. We pray for his grace and his mercy to come into our life and change us.

[17 : 50] So, this whole church is in a very religious world and they're struggling. And ultimately, there's two outside actions that a Christ-redeemed heart will bring.

The first one is a love for the Lord your God who you will love with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and you will love others as yourself.

That is the result of a Christ-redeemed heart. So, as this new church in Colossae is growing in their faith and they're trying to get going, they fought those two battles I told you about.

Now, mysticism tends to be mystical things that people used to do. It was like secret knowledge.

Like, if you knew this secret knowledge of what to do, you will grow in your faith.

Like, if you got the right amount of candles and you lit them at the right amount of time and you turn down the lights, you might create this place where your inner person can come out, right?

[18 : 58] And then the other one, as I said, was the legalists. You need to add more rules, more laws, more drinks, more things you need to avoid in order to live in an appearance.

Now, I don't know if I should get in this with you. I might confuse you. But a big part of Jewish mysticism at that time is they actually worshipped angels.

And the reason they worshipped angels is they believed that when Moses was on the mount, when he was receiving the commandments from God, angels brought the commandments to Moses, right?

And Moses received that law. And instead of worshipping the God who gave the commandments to God, they worshipped the angels. You with me? Does that sound anywhere similar to life here?

Right? We worship the created rather than the creator. It's nuts. It's insane. We can admit that there's all sorts of beauty, great, wonderful things around us.

[20 : 03] But we would rather worship that than the one who created it. All right. So the second one, the battle that I talked about is this legalism where they were trying to bring in elements of the Jewish faith into Christianity, what to eat, what to drink, what festivals to celebrate.

And he brings this one up about circumcision. And I want to explain this to you. Because when you were a Jew, when you were created as a Jew, on the eighth day, every male was supposed to be circumcised.

You know, that piece of his foreskin was supposed to. And that was made to separate, and he would be a part of the Jewish nation. He was known to be Jewish because he was circumcised.

And that was like this idea of cutting off the bad part of the flesh, and it meant he's now a part of the redeemed people. But it didn't mean that he was actually saved.

Do you know what I mean by that? But you could still be Jewish in the Old Testament, go to the temple, and not really believe in God. You with me on that one? But they became very religious in

this, right?

[21 : 12] So on the eighth day, they were circumcised. And what it did is it indicated membership into the covenant community. Today, and maybe this is your background, if you grew up in a Presbyterian or someone who practiced infant baptism, it's the same kind of idea upholds.

It meant that your children, when you baptize them, are children of the covenant. It's not, some people believe it means the child is saved. That's not what it's supposed to mean. Basically, what infant baptism means, the same as what circumcision means, it means your parents are Christian. In the Old Testament, it meant your parents were Jewish. That's really what it meant, that they followed Yahweh. Today, if you get infant baptized, usually means you're Lutheran or Presbyterian or another.

It talks about your parents' faith. It does not talk about your faith. You with me on that one? A lot of people get confused over that one. That's really all that it means. Because even in the Old Testament, God himself said, and the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul that you may live.

You with me on that one? It was your heart that needed to be changed to love the Lord, not a piece of your skin. For even Abraham, it was an outward sign of an inner faith.

[22 : 44] So, why is this important to know? Let's take a look at the text in Colossians 2, verse 12. It says, 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.

So, before we are Christians, our lives are dominated by our own self-seeking, spiritual condition is dead. We're zero.

We're nothing. We're not alive. In baptism, the significance of baptism is that by being baptized in Jesus, it is a symbol of us dying to our sin and rising in the newness of Jesus Christ.

Amen? That's why we're Baptists, right? And if you guys aren't Baptists, you're not members, we can make you Baptists. It's really simple. There's a tank. We can save you. Don't worry. It's not too late. But it's a sign that you have been raised with Christ.

You are a new person. That means the old man is dead. It stays in the grave. The new man walks with Jesus.

[23 : 58] What it also means is that once you were saved, that hold, that right that Satan had over you no longer exists.

Sin has no rightful claim on you. You were raised with Christ. You are a new creation. There is a new heart that beats within you.

And what's interesting is Jesus Christ, who lived that perfect life, gives us his righteousness. He gives it to us. It's like a cloak on him, and he takes it, and he puts it on us.

So when the Father looks at us, he sees his perfect son. And what's interesting is the same energy that raised Jesus from the dead is the same energy that saves us to this day.

So a couple of questions would come up. So you hear, I believe they understood this initial good news of the gospel. They accepted it.

[24 : 59] But then people started asking the question. Can I lose my salvation? Is there anything I can do? Has everybody ever asked themselves that question? Yeah, right?

Can I lose it? Well, let me tell you a few things. Did you save yourself? No, you didn't. Notice in verse 13, it says you were dead.

God made you alive. Notice it says dead. Doesn't say mostly dead. Doesn't say partly dead.

What happens is when you are dead, God makes you alive. God breathes life into you so you become spiritually alive. What's interesting, Ephesians 2 says that when God saves you, the Holy Spirit places a mark on you that you were sealed for eternity.

Guess what? You who couldn't save yourself, you can't overpower God. You can't. His mark is on you. You can try to look like the world all you want and guess what?

[26 : 10] That seal, that promise, God is going to bring you back. The fact of the matter is, if you were the one to earn your salvation, guess what? You would lose it. If you think that you earn your salvation, you will eventually lose it.

The fact of the matter is, when people teach you that you can lose your salvation, I don't believe they are motivated by wanting to teach you error, but they want to make sure that you continue to live for Jesus.

Okay, you get that? All right, you're now saved by Jesus, amen. So now you got to keep doing these really good things to make sure that you're really saved so you get to go to heaven, okay? Because if you become saved, you say, well, now I have Jesus. I'm going to go do what I want, right? Someone who, have you ever done that? You know, you've shared the gospel with someone. All right, now I can go live any which way I want.

I've got that guarantee of heaven. Well, anybody who would think that doesn't understand what happened at salvation. That God just didn't forgive your sin.

[27 : 18] God took his son and put him on a cross and he poured out all the wrath of mankind on his son.

He did that once. He's not going to do it again. So if you actually hold that you can believe your salvation, I would contend that you would believe that you can never regain that salvation. That Jesus Christ only died once for your sins and it's for all time. So if you teach that you can lose your salvation, I would say then you have to be consistent in your teaching and teach that it's too late, you're doomed.

You cannot have it because Jesus Christ only died once. Another reason is this type of thinking is that anyone who is truly saved by the power of God, like I said, who understands what Jesus Christ did to him on the cross, who actually loves Jesus, wants to follow Jesus.

Isn't that the whole goal? It's not just to be saved by hell, but you want to live for Jesus. The other question I usually ask is, when does eternal life begin?

[28 : 38] Jesus Christ promised that once you become saved, you have eternal life. So does eternal life happen at that moment of salvation or when you die? If you come from a Catholic background, you know where I'm going with this.

The Catholic background teaches that at that moment you face God and then he counts up all the good and he counts up all the bad. And if you've done enough to outweigh that scale, you get into heaven.

So that promise that Jesus Christ said that you will be with me in heaven wouldn't really work. You see, eternal life begins at that moment of salvation.

The Bible teaches that you have eternal life at the moment of your salvation and there is never a condition placed upon it. Here's the other thing. If you know that there is a possibility that you could lose your salvation, the money question is, what sin that causes you to lose your salvation?

Is it a number of sins or just one sin? Is that sin an action? Maybe that sin is a thought. Hey, listen, I'll be honest with you.

[29 : 51] I've had horrible thoughts in my life. People have hurt me so much I've had murder in my heart that I've had to ask God to forgive me of. Right? Guy cut me off in traffic. Who knows what comes out of our hearts, right?

But could that have been? Does that mean I'm eternally doomed? Is it a successive group of thoughts or is it a string of actions? What happens is when you believe you could lose your salvation, you start to rank your sins.

You start to see some sins as good. And if you're Catholic, you know where I'm going with this.

There's these venial sins and there's the mortal sins, right? If you do the mortal, there's no coming back.

Venial, yeah, you can just go see a priest that's dealt with. And I always remember there's a mini, there's a medium sin that you could do that. You need to, you got to do a few more graces to get in God's good favor.

You guys who are Catholic know what I'm talking about. It's been so long that I grew up Catholic, all right? So I forget all the qualifications. But they used to have these qualifications. Guess what? God isn't like that. Every sin is seen as a rebellious against God.

[30 : 55] Everyone. Every sin. Then how do we have hope? And we're going to answer that question in a bit. You see, there were men who lived good lives on the outside that Paul always confronted.

In fact, the Apostle Paul said, if our spiritual health was based on how we lived, he would be the greatest human being who essentially ever lived. He said he obeyed the law.

He did all the festivals. He did all those things. And if you were going to judge on outside behavior, he was the Jew of all Jews. But as we all know, he had evil in his heart.

So the question persists, or the question to ask is, if we're saved, we're saved at that moment, we're eternally locked in, why do we still sin?

Why do we still struggle? Why is there some behaviors dishonoring to God? Well, 1 John 2.16 tells us this.

[32 : 05] The reality is, we desire to do good, to do to obey, but the flesh is still subject to temptation. 1 John 2.16 says, For all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and the pride and possessions is not from the Father, but is from the world.

It is still part of our body, but it does not have dominance over us. The fact of the matter is, sin no longer affects the outcome of our salvation. Amen? We may sin, but we still belong to God.

It wars within us to keep us from growing, but the victory has already been won. In 2 Corinthians, Paul clearly states that any man who is in Christ is a new creature.

The old things have passed away and behold, new things have come right then, right there. And the moment we are saved, we are immediately freed from sin's dominance and judgment, but we're not yet free of its presence.

And as you talk to any mature Christian, they will tell you, they probably don't sin as much, but they're far more aware of their sin, right? It's not the big things, it's the little things, how they talk to someone, how they approach someone, even whether it be in a grocery store.

[33 : 21] Was I being as loving as I could, right? Those are all good things. Those are, that is God conforming us in His image. But here's the big thing, guys.

When we are saved, we are indwelt by the power of the Holy Spirit. And at that moment, that Spirit is within us, that is the power to live the Christian life. And I always ask, someone says, can someone become a Christian and not grow, not change?

I would argue, if you believe that, then you believe in that the flesh is more powerful than the Spirit. Because the Holy Spirit has to bear fruit, amen? We read this throughout all of, whether we're in Galatians, the fruits of the Spirit, the fruits have to be born out.

So if you live a life and none of those fruits are showing, it might be time to readjust that. Maybe you weren't saved. If you desire the things of this world more than the things of God, maybe it's time to contemplate what that decision was.

Maybe your allegiance isn't with God, it's still with yourself. All right? So that's the first question I hope to ask you and answer any questions. And I know I might not be the clearest guy in the world today, but if you want to talk about what it is to have and know that you are saved, come talk to me.

[34 : 37] I definitely want to have that chat with you. So that's the first question is am I really saved? The second question is am I living or am I forgiven? Am I forgiven?

Let's take a look at the text again. Colossians 2. This is powerful, guys. Verse 13. And you who were dead in your trespasses, that you were dead in how you worked, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, how unholy you are, God made alive together with him, right?

Together with Jesus. Because of Jesus, you are now made alive. Why? Having forgiven us all our trespasses by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands, this he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

All right, I'm going to repeat this. And I want you guys to pretend you're really Baptist, okay? This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

Thank you. Who's the real Baptist here, right? Thank you, Mary. Right? The Baptist of the Baptist. But I'm going to give you guys another chance. Why? Because I'm full of grace, all right? This is your last chance.

[35 : 54] This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. Amen. All that nasty stuff we did, it's gone. Now, what does that mean?

As one author says about this subject that Baptists should be really celebrating, is this is perhaps the most exciting and comforting doctrine in all of scriptures.

So in order for us to be right with God, we have to be forgiven. There is no right with God without forgiveness. We were dead. Our wrongs made us dead.

In our uncircumcised, unholy way, we were dead. Not only that, we're dead because of the wrong things we do. And we are dead because we are outside the covenant community.

Dead means locked in sin's grasp that one is unable to respond to God. When you are dead, the Bible and the good news make no sense to you.

[37 : 00] Why? Because you still think you're good. You still think you're good. If you think you're good, you don't need Jesus. You can do your own things that will save you, right? One who is dead is one who is dominated by the world, the flesh, and Satan.

Notice that Paul wrote, God made alive together with him. That means God made us alive with Jesus.

Man didn't search for it. Man never requested it. God did. Man didn't do it. God did it. The fact of the matter is, if there was anything that we could do, we would be able to take credit for our salvation. So, the reason we are made right with God is that God forgives us all our sins and trespasses. So, the question you might be asking is, how much does God forgive?

Well, let me tell you some good things about God's forgiveness. Isaiah 118 says, Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.

[38 : 13] Though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. Amen? Right? Let the wicked forsake his thought, Isaiah writes. And the unrighteous man his thoughts.

Let him return to the Lord that may have compassion on him and to our God and he will abundantly pardon. Amen? Acts 13 38.

Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man's forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.

That's huge. All those laws they thought they had to do, guess what? This guy, Jesus, he can free you from all that stuff that you were trying to do to please God.

Why? Because he forgives you. What does forgiveness look like? Let's look at verse 14. By canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands, this God set aside, nailing it to the cross.

[39 : 27] just think, there's like this record of debt, your name is on it and it's got your sins on it and you owe God. It's like a certificate, almost like a wanted poster.

And the fact of the matter is when we see that we feel hostility towards us. God takes that and he nails that wanted poster on the cross.

He paid the penalty and the record is no longer owed and no trace of it remains.

So I'm going to give you quickly, I'm going to tell you some wonderful things about God's forgiveness and I hope this will be an encouragement to you. First, God's forgiveness is gracious. God's forgiveness is gracious. That means it is not earned. You do not earn God's forgiveness. God freely gives it. It is a free gift of God, Romans 3.24 says, and we are justified, meaning we are made right by this wonderful grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

[40 : 37] You know what? Jesus Christ just keeps giving it. Have you guys seen that video? It's going viral right now. I don't know how much you guys are online, but it's the woman feeding the dogs with hot dogs. Have you guys seen that? This lady comes out, it looks like it's in Korea or something, and she's just got this mound of hot dogs and there's hundreds of street dogs and she just keeps throwing the hot dogs out in the streets and then someone puts more hot dogs and the dogs are just having the time of their lives and someone wrote, this is like it is with the grace of God.

He just keeps pouring those hot dogs on us, right? How many preachers have you ever heard equal grace with hot dogs, right? But there's just all these hot dogs and these dogs are happy as can be.

The second thing we need to understand about God's forgiveness is that it is complete. God's forgiveness is complete. God's grace will always be greater than sin. Amen, right?

Ephesians 1.7, where sin increased, grace abounded all the more. Second thing, and you guys might know that not understand this, but I hope you'll accept it today. God's forgiveness is eager.

Do you understand? God is eager to forgive you. God is anxious to forgive. Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked rather than he who should turn from his ways and live?

[41 : 58] Remember the story of Jonah and Nineveh that I preached on, right? God wanted these horrible people to be saved. God was quick to forgive them.

Psalms 86.5 says, For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon your name. Fourth thing we need to understand about forgiveness is God's forgiveness is certain.

God's forgiveness is certain. In Acts 26, he says, To open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Jesus.

It is certain because it is based on God's promise. And does God lie? No. Here's the other thing about God's forgiveness. It is unequalled.

God's forgiveness is unequalled. Micah, the prophet, says, Who is a God like you pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance.

[43 : 10] He does not retain his anger forever because he delights in steadfast love. Write that on your fridge. God's forgiveness is motivating.

God's forgiveness is motivating. Ephesians 4.32 says, Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as Christ forgave you.

If God forgave us of our rebellion and sin, why would we not forgive others? I'm going to tell you, and Dave's not going to, you know what, Dave, I might be giving away the secret of Dave's counseling.

More people are in counseling because they are choosing not to forgive. Do you know that? They're holding on to something from the past. It's either a wrong they did or someone else did a wrong to them. And they're gripped by an inability to grow often.

And often that way to freedom is forgiving someone who wronged them. And it's coming to an understanding of how much God forgave you. Is that true? See, God's forgiveness is motivating.

[44 : 26] So this brings us to our final questions, friends. If we have complete salvation, if we have complete forgiveness, must not we have complete victory?

Take a look at verse 15. And I'm going to tell you something. This verse, it's a very confusing verse. It looks very clear, but it says, he disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in him.

And basically, the image that Paul is creating is like a Roman parade. And when Rome would win a great victory in a foreign land, they would bring slaves from that land, they'd bring all the wild animals, and they would march through Rome, right?

Just to celebrate. Look at the tigers and the jaguars or elephants. Whatever we were able to conquer, these are the riches. That's how we've historically looked at that.

But the reason I believe the trans... It's hard. It's a translation issue. It's got that idea of the parade, but there was actually a Greek parade. The Greek parade differed than a Roman parade.

[45 : 33] A Roman parade was a celebrator of the one who did the conquering, and they just rejoiced. It was more of not so much a diminishing. Because the reason why I don't believe it's the Roman way, because Satan isn't God's enemy.

Do you know that? He is, but it's not like they're equal. Satan is like a mosquito in our ears at night when we're trying to get to sleep. That's really what Satan is. He doesn't have equal power with God.

So, to say that he had to save us from Satan would be a false teaching. Fact of the matter is, Christ won the victory, and who was the victory over?

The law. It was the law. That's what I believe when it says, he disarmed the rulers and authorities. That was the law, the Old Testament, which ruled over them.

Jesus Christ fulfilled the law. Amen? He broke the power of the law. Freedom is now found in Jesus Christ. It wasn't. So that's what I really believe it's there. But, anyhow, the whole point is, we have complete victory because Jesus Christ defeated the law.

[46 : 43] Amen? And what it was the law, that was a declaration of God's righteousness. So God did not throw away his righteousness or the legal. That's why we have the cross, which fulfilled the legality.

Anyway, I'm going to end this with a quote. And it's actually a quote of a quote. It's a book, and it's written, and it's talking about Martin Luther. It says, In fact, Martin Luther, the great Christian German reformer, tells of a dream that he had in which he was visited by Satan at night.

Satan presented Luther with a record of his life and said, Is that true? Did you write it? The poor, terrified Luther had to confess it.

It was all true. All those actions you say that I did, all the words that I say that I did are true. Scroll after scroll in this dream of Luther, Satan just kept unraveling every scroll with all the wrongs that he had done.

And the same confession was wrung out of Luther again and again. Are you guilty? Yes, I am. Are you guilty? Yes, I am. And at length, Satan prepared for his departure, having brought Luther down to the lowest depths of abject ministry.

[47 : 54] Suddenly, Luther turned to the tempter and said, It is true, every word of it, but right across it, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's son, cleanses us from all sin.

Satan, my friends, is the great accuser. Not only does he want us to hide our heads in shame of our sins, but he wants our shame to paralyze us, leading us to a point of disbelief.

You see, the purpose of the law was to demonstrate that one was imperfect, that you would get discouraged because you knew you could not live it out. But that is what Satan does.

When Satan confronts you and I, he uses the law. But the fact of the matter is, if you are saved in Jesus Christ, the law is no longer valid. Satan will attack you with shame and misery, just as he did with Satan.

But all you need to do is proclaim that God's blood paid it all. Remember, a few weeks ago, I defined Christian faith as meaning allegiance to Jesus Christ.

[49 : 02] If you have given your allegiance to Jesus Christ, guess what? You have perfect salvation. If you have given your allegiance to Jesus Christ, you have perfect forgiveness.

You see, if you believe these two truths, then you have what is called perfect victory in Jesus Christ. You never have a need to believe that Satan's lies again.

That you are somehow incomplete or missing anything as a Christian. Why? Because all God gets the glory.

Amen? Let's pray. Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, we just think of your goodness of salvation and through your forgiveness. Father, I know we look at our actions and we struggle with the belief that maybe we aren't saved and sometimes it's right for us to ask those questions.

We need to be challenged. Is my allegiance with Jesus or maybe it's to my career, my family, my boss at work or anywhere else that I try to gain my self-worth.

[50 : 15] Maybe it's in a false religion that I follow. Maybe it's even a form of Christianity that I believe is making me right with God and not understanding that Jesus Christ is the only one that can make me right with God.

Father, we are about to celebrate this command, this festival, this time called communion and we are meant to do it as people who have placed their allegiance with you.

We have called you Lord. It's not for those who do not know you who are simply trying you out or just to hear. The fact of the matter is by taking this bread and this juice does not heal us.

It doesn't affect us spiritually. It doesn't affect us physically. There's no magical mystery power to it. But it's an act of obedience and upon which we remember that in order for us to be forgiven you needed to die on that cross.

And you did it for us because of your great love for us. Not because we had kind of good hearts or somewhat good hearts.

[51 : 29] Our hearts were dead. They were black. They only beat for themselves. But God, we give you thanks that you made our hearts alive and we pray that we continue to walk in you to make our hearts strong.

So this morning as we come together for communion, we do these things to remember all the things that you did to make us right with you. We remember that you sent your son, you separated yourself from your son who had been living with you for eternity.

He came, he gave up his godhood to live here as a man yet fully God but yet given up that power to be flesh and blood to experience our reality.

that he endured false accusations, he endured his closest friends walking away, he endured his people even though he was there to be his Messiah, he endured them taking and yelling crucify him, crucify him.

You endured all that. You allowed them to put your son on a cross to nail your hands and feet which was how you nailed our sins to the cross and granted us forgiveness.

[52 : 52] You allowed him to hang there for a day in agonizing pain as he died a death that we could not die and he willingly submitted to sacrificing himself for us.

He separated from God through our sin. But the reason we celebrate this communion is because three days later you rose again.

You conquered death. You conquered the penalty. And now the law was broken. We do not come to you through the law, not like we ever could, but we now come to you through faith.

We believe you did all those things for us. And once we believe you give us your righteousness, the power that raised you from the grave now raises us up from our dead hearts.

