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St Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th St. SW
Austin, MN, 55912-1749

Pastor Ted Barthels
sermon preached on-
July 28, 2013
10th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture Lessons: Genesis 18:20-32; Luke 11:1-13

Hymns: 456; (38:1-3); 457; 408; 453:1,2

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord
and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Colossians 2:6-15

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in
Him, 7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith,
as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty
deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic
principles of the world, and not according to Christ. 9 For in
Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10 and you
are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and
power. 11 In Him you were also circumcised with the
circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the
sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 buried with
Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him
through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the
dead. 13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the
uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with
Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out
the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was
contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed
it to the cross. 15 Having disarmed principalities and powers,
He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

This is the Word of God!

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth.
Amen.

In Christ Jesus, dear fellow Redeemed

INTRO: Secure relationships –

Secure relationships are essential to life. You have to be able to trust the individuals to whom you are connected. We can see how that is true in family relationships. Husbands and wives must be able to open up to one another, look to one another for support and even sustenance, not only on a physical level, but also, and often more importantly, on an emotional and a spiritual level. When people outside of that relationship start to meddle with it a breakdown in the family can occur. Sometimes friends may offer advice that it is not healthy. Challenges arise in every marriage and in every family even without the flawed ideas of the world being added to them.

The Lord compares the church's relationship with Him to a marriage, with Christ being the husband at the head of the church and the church being His bride. We have glorious relationship with the Lord, with one of its most precious features being the intimate communication that we have with Him in prayer. We are able to open our hearts to Him, and He hears us. We are invited to cast every care upon Him and He is eager to not only listen, but to respond with every needed blessing.

What Paul teaches us in our text is that -

Theme: In Christ We Possess a Complete Relationship with God.

In the first verse of our text Paul lays out the two parts of that relationship. The first is that we have received Christ Jesus as Lord. The second is that we make our walk through life

connected to Jesus. Ideas of the world would mess with both of those parts of this complete and glorious relationship.

I. In Christ We Possess a Complete Salvation.

Firmly rooted, built on a solid foundation, we are established in the faith which we have been taught. Don't let anyone take you captive with their high minded ideas according to the tradition of men that is according to the ways of the world.

The Colossian Christians were being duped into believing that the teaching that had received from Paul and other apostles was not complete. They were being told that there was more to the true faith than simply believing. There were forms and rituals that had to be followed. There were centuries of ceremonies that all brought one closer to God, and, when properly maintained, these ceremonies would enhance the certainty of salvation that was to be found in Christ and His cross.

There were also a number of teachers circulating their ideas that a higher spiritual wisdom was waiting for those who were willing to pursue these ideas that could be found in revelations from angels and other spiritual beings. Paul was very straightforward in condemning these false notions as a form of slavery. To take hold of these ideas as an improvement to the gospel was dangerous. They were anything but an improvement. It was allowing one to be brought into slavery, the slavery of the law and sin, slavery to the carnal notions of the flesh.

This warning from the Apostle Paul couldn't be more timely for us than it is right now. Many see the establishment of science as the new higher knowledge. They propose that the writings of Holy Scripture are so ancient that they come from a period of backwardness and ignorance, being riddled with mythology, and superstitions. We are told to let go of the bigoted ideas of the past that are found in Holy Scripture, and see the way society is today, and apply the ideas of the Jesus in a new and better way. We are encouraged to understand that there is much good that we can do, and it is in the doing of good that we fulfill the

gospel. Along with this gospel of works, there is a promotion of those emotional, spiritual highs one can experience in new and modern forms of worship that are supposed to bring us a greater certainty of salvation.

Is your head spinning yet? I was throwing a lot of ideas at you from all sorts of different directions. But that is exactly the way it is in the world. These are all basic principles of the world not according to Christ. Spiritual ideas of how **we** can make our Christian faith **more complete** and pertinent to life, and our relationship with God more sure are coming at us constantly and from many of directions. We need to **beware** that we are not taken captive by one or more of these many different ideas that have found their way into the visible Christian Church.

We need to remain focused on the basic truth of the gospel of Christ our crucified and risen Savior! This gospel is a complete Gospel, and it applies to our life situation and needs in every way, “**and you are complete in Him**” (Col 2:10).

Paul reminds us of who Christ is.

Colossians 2:9 “For in Him (Jesus) dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”

Jesus **is** God incarnate. The Son of God, begotten of the Father from eternity, came down to earth and took upon Himself our humanity that He might be our brother, that He might be under the law, and fulfill the law’s demands for us. He became truly human that He might die in our place. But that did not in anyway detract from the divine. In Him all the fullness of the Godhead dwells **bodily** -- that is in human flesh and blood. He did this that we might have the fullness of salvation in connection with Him, through faith in **His** merits!

We are complete in Him! Our righteousness, our standing before God, our eternal life and salvation can not be made more complete. It is already complete **in Him!** This is exactly what was accomplished when Christ died and rose again! God has --

Colossians 2:13-15 forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

Isn't this a simply marvelous way of presenting the comfort and joy of the gospel? We are all keenly aware of our many sins. We know we have trespassed along the way. Indeed we understand that even though sin disgusts us, our sinful nature is still present with us and lures us into sin everyday. God could write up an indictment that would put to shame the hundreds of charges the prosecutors have compiled against that horrid kidnapper in south Cleveland. We could have, and if left to ourselves would have, a rap sheet that hangs all the way down to hell, with a sure sentence of an eternity in the prison house of hell going with it. But God has wiped out all those charges. He isn't simple declaring that our sins didn't happen. As a just judge He couldn't do that. He has taken all of our sins out of the way, having nailed them to the cross!

With each nail driven into our Savior's hands and feet our sins were nailed there. Remember the placard that was nailed above Jesus' head, the placard that was to state the reason for the condemned to be there on the cross? What was on the Lord's cross but the simple truth that brings us hope, "**Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews!**" Jesus came into the world to go to that cross and to bear our sin upon that cross and pay a debt which only the very Son of God could pay. And then He rose again and He descended into hell, and there publicly proclaimed before the spirits in prison His once and for all victory over the devil, death and hell!

That is the gospel of Christ Jesus. It is full and complete, and it is there for you. No one can improve upon that truth by tinkering with it, or by seeking to add some additional righteousness to it. It can only be spoiled. This is the solid

foundation upon which our faith has been founded, and from which it draws strength for life.

II. In Christ We Have A New Life.

Now we return to that second thought Paul presented in the first verse of our text -- walking in the faith. After reviewing the facts of the completeness of our salvation in Christ we are led by Paul to the motivation that propels us forward in our Christian lives, “**abounding in (our Christian walk of life) with thanksgiving.**”

When we live godly lives we are not attempting to earn or secure any favor from God. That Christ has already done, **completely done** for us. We are showing God our thankfulness for the fullness of salvation we have in Him.

Even in this we are brought to the realization of the grace and power of God that is present with us. On our own we do not possess the strength to do anything good. In Christ we have a life, a new life that is given to us by God. We read verse 13:

Colossians 2:13 “And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.”

You were dead. Don't miss the significance of that word. When we see a dead animal on the road we don't expect it to get up and move as our car gets closer to it. If it gets up and runs, we rightly conclude the animal wasn't dead after all. Apart from Christ we were spiritually dead because of our sins. We couldn't do anything pleasing to God or worthy to present to Him, not apart from Christ! **But God made us alive together with Christ.** He made us alive by taking our sins away. Now, together with Christ we can do things that are worthy of the Lord, to present to Him as thank-offerings for the gift of life He has given us. What a joy and privilege to have a life that is good and God-pleasing. That life came to you in your baptism.

Colossians 2:11-12 In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

Being buried with Jesus in baptism we die to sin. We are **“putting off the body of the sins of the flesh.”** We are to see in our being brought to faith in baptism God working in us to throw away the old and put on the new. In baptism we are also raised together with Christ! We share in His resurrection glory. God works all this in us through faith. This is real life, a spiritual and eternal life that we possess right now and forever!

So let’s walk in this new life! Let’s walk in a manner worthy of the Lord and this wondrous gospel. Let’s shun the false ideas of the world, and also the pursuit of carnal pleasure and the lusts of the flesh embraced by the world. Let’s not allow our speech to be polluted by the coarse language that dominates so much of the conversation and entertainment the world embraces. Let’s live a joyous and pleasant life filled with the good blessings which God has given us to enrich us in life. Let us, in our joyous and thankful way of living with others, **“show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light”** (1 Peter 2:9). As we shun what is evil, we will abound in that which is good.

Galatians 5:22 “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control.”

That is what characterizes the life that we have in Christ Jesus. God has put it in our hearts and empowered it in our lives. By the blessing of the Spirit we let it flow for all to be blessed by it, and for God to be glorified.

In Christ We Possess this Complete Relationship with God.

Colossians 2:6-7 “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.”

AMEN.

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.