

**“A Covenant to Forgive, Part 3” Colossians 2:8-15, Sermon Notes**  
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**Saving Grace Bible Church**  
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**Morning Worship Service**

**Sermon Purpose:** In our text of Colossians 2:8-15 we learn of six reasons why Christ is able to protect us from the deceptions of this world and reconcile us to God

This will be our third and final look at what is taking place around us

- Our goal is to gain a biblical perspective of what is taking place around us

There is no doubt there is uneasiness and difficulties around us

- People are angry
- People are scared
- People are depressed
- People are confused

And as our secular culture pulls away from God, and as the Church’s voice is either unclear, because it has drifted from the truth, or weak, because it is afraid of man’s response to God’s message, then there is nothing stopping man from running to his own destruction

- The more man and mankind moves away from God the greater the misery and destruction he will face

If man moves away from God he moves towards his own demise. To reject God and pull away from God is to man’s ruin

This is because God created man in His own image

- Being created in the image of God means that we are able to reflect the image of God
- We are rational beings. We are communicative beings. We are moral beings just as God is

God is holy and just. God is righteous and good. God is the source of all love, peace, mercy, and grace. God has all power, all knowledge, and is all present. He has no beginning and no end. He is without fault

- There is no other being in all the universe like God
- For there are no other gods

God’s essence or being is His perfections and yet those perfections are distinct and identifiable. God is not made up of various parts. God is one, unified essence. There is one being God

- The God who is one has many perfections and yet is one

“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!” (Deut. 6:4 NAS)

This one God, has many perfections

- That is God is love
- God is justice

- God is mercy, wise, good, truthful, faithful, patient, and righteous

As being created in the image of God there are some attributes which God shares with us. We can reflect these attributes

Then there are attributes that make God distinct and are wholly His

- Immutable
- Omnipotent
- Omniscient
- Omnipresent
- Eternal

In all of these perfections, He is said to be perfect

- No flaw
- No imperfection
- No lack or deficiency

“*Thine* eyes are too pure to approve evil, And Thou canst not look on wickedness *with favor*. Why dost Thou look with favor on those who deal treacherously? Why art Thou silent when the wicked swallow up Those more righteous than they?” (Hab. 1:13 NAS)

“He is so pure that the heavens are seen as impure before Him” (job 15:15)

He is perfect and in Him is no darkness:

“Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matt. 5:48 NAS)

“And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.” (1 Jn. 1:5 NAS)

“but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior; <sup>16</sup> because it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” (1 Pet. 1:15-16 NAS)

- God is without fault, flaw, nor is He lacking in any of His perfections
- They operate together in perfect harmony without any corruption
  - Justice does not nullify mercy
  - Love does not undo justice
  - Etc

God is also the source of life. In God alone do we find the meaning and purpose of life. We find our purpose in glorifying God with our lives. He is the one who gives life and restores life

“And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.” (1 Jn. 5:11 NAS)

“And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.” (1 Jn. 5:20 NAS)

- In the knowledge of Christ comes eternal life
- To know Him and believe upon Him is eternal life

"For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself;" (Jn. 5:26 NAS)

- The father and the son are those who give life and are the source of life.

"For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day." (Jn. 6:40 NAS)

"even as Thou gavest Him authority over all mankind, that to all whom Thou hast given Him, He may give eternal life. <sup>3</sup>"And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." (Jn. 17:2-3 NAS)

God created life and God gives life

*So God is perfect in all He is and does. He created the heavens and the earth and gave life to all living creatures. Man finds his greatest satisfaction and purpose wrapped up in God*

God of Peace

The Bible is clear in teaching that God is a God of peace.

- Fruit of the Spirit: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness," (Galatians 5:22 NAU)

"Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen." (Romans 15:33 NAU)

"The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you." (Romans 16:20 NAU)

"for God is not a *God* of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints." (1 Cor. 14:33 NAS)

"Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you" (2 Corinthians 13:11 NAU)

"The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you." (Philippians 4:9 NAU)

"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thessalonians 5:23 NAU)

"Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, *even* Jesus our Lord," (Hebrews 13:20 NAU)

- God is the source of peace and love – "God of Peace" "God of love and peace"
- God gives peace – fruit of the Spirit
- God who is peace brings holiness – 1 Thess 5:23
- God gives peace as He sent Christ to redeem - Heb 13:20

Therefore those who walk in peace are called Sons of God. Matt 5:9

It is significant that God gives us the gospel of peace to engage the world

“and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;” (Eph. 6:15 NAS)

This is what our world is lacking right now. They have no peace. People are caught up in the constant backlash or warring ideologies

- If someone makes a comment about how certain lives matter, the other side lashes out
- Then the person adjusts his comments and now his allies lash out
- Once you speak out about your convictions or view point you are dragged into the ideological tug of war
- The only people who are ready for this tug of war are those who have set their interest on God’s interest

It is better for us to be at peace with God and to be on the side of the God of peace. *He will bring about what is good and right among His people*

- We know that He is all powerful
- We know He will accomplish His perfect will
- And the Long Arm of Justice will not be stopped

So God is Holy, Just, and Good. There is no unholiness in God. Nor does He look upon evil with favor

*The chief problem of man is that he has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and man is separated from God*

- Man’s sinful heart is manifesting more and more
- The unloving acts of hate and violence against one another is a symptom of having moved away from honoring God and His ways
- Man wars to find peace and enjoyment apart from God and he seeks the temporary pleasures of sin
- There are none righteous

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,<sup>19</sup> because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.<sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.<sup>21</sup> For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.<sup>22</sup> Professing to be wise, they became fools,<sup>23</sup> and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.<sup>24</sup> Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them.<sup>25</sup> For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.” (Rom. 1:18-25 NAS)

Paul has said here that man is suppressing the knowledge of God

- The knowledge of God is evident within them.
  - This is why even the carnal person calls out to God
- The knowledge of God is evident around them

- God has made Himself known through creation

What man needs is to draw near to God but what man does is pull away from Him

Let me close this series where we started in the book of Colossians

- Colossians chapter 2
- I wanted to cover what I believe the heart of the issue is, which is forgiveness
  - Today people have avoided forgiveness
    - Those who have been oppressed, targets of racism or racial activities, or victims of other crimes are not taught to forgive
  - Today people want retribution
  - The message of forgiveness is lost in the new Gospel of liberalism
  - The message of forgiveness is center to God's good news for man
  - And I am wondering if genuine believers are ashamed to share the message of God's grace and forgiveness towards sinners

Here in Colossians 2 we see the central place of forgiveness in the gospel so let me draw your attention there

### **1) Introduction - The Command**

As we have seen Paul was writing to protect the Church from ungodly philosophies which were seeking to mislead the Church

- He was directing the Church back to faith in God
- He labors for them 2:1
- He wants them to be protected from deluding arguments 2:4

Our text is Colossians 2:8-15.

“See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. <sup>9</sup> For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form, <sup>10</sup> and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; <sup>11</sup> and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, <sup>14</sup> having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us *and* which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. <sup>15</sup> When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.”

In verse 8: Paul starts with a compelling command:

“See to it” This is a present active imperative. Which means this is a command that must be continually fulfilled. You can say it this way. Continually make sure that nobody takes you captive

- This is a command to protect yourself from error
- Each one of us has the responsibility to guard ourselves from being misled away from Christ
- We have the personal responsibility to make sure we are not deceived
- We are commanded by God to be careful of the spiritual dangers in the world

This is a strong command. It is a command of vigilance. We are to be on guard. We are to stand alert. We are to be aware of the very real dangers that await us. In this case these dangers are going to slip in not as overt attacks but subtle distractions. The danger is not a physical persecution. The danger is not a specific person or group. Instead the danger is a subtle teaching. The text goes on and gives us three distinct characteristics of this “empty philosophy.” Two statements about what it is and one statement about what it is not

How does this captivity take place? Col 2:8

Literally Paul’s command here is “Beware that no one carries you off captive through empty philosophies.”

- False teaching
- Lies
- Deceptions
- The craftiness and deceitful scheming of man
- Natural earthly traditions
- According to the elementary principles of this world

Textually the word for according (the Greek preposition kata) is here three times

- It is according to the tradition of men
- It is according to the elementary principles of the world
- It is *not* according to Christ

Error always looks like this; it takes our eyes off of Christ and places it on other things

It has as its goal to take our eyes off of Christ and place them on men. This philosophical teaching appeals to us. It draws us in. It is inherently dangerous. Notice this philosophy appeals to our flesh. Their teaching will be according to the tradition of men. That is to say they will have no absolute basis to make their claims but it sounds right

- We have been doing things this way for thousands of years so it must be right
- As well these philosophies are natural and carnal. That is, they are earthly
- They are according to the elementary principles of the world

When Paul speaks of elementary things, he speaks of man-made religion 2:16; 2:20

You see these teachers were leading the people astray. They were changing the message of the Bible. Instead of delivering people from their bondage these men were placing the people under a yoke of bondage

Let us remember this:

Any attempt to create a religion that does not reflect the teaching of the Scriptures and does not accurately teach the Christ of the Scriptures, necessarily presents itself as an enemy of the Scriptures and an enemy of the God of the Scriptures

If we embrace error, we make God our enemy because we are opposed to His truth. Therefore, we must be on guard

Verse 8 leads to an important question: If these philosophies are pervasive and if they appeal to our natural fleshly cravings then how are we protected?

- How do we guard ourselves? What is God's answer to the problem of sin and the attempts of man to give answers to man's greatest struggles?

This is where Paul's answer is great. Instead of turning to wisdom or understanding, he turns to the source of all wisdom and understanding and he says to look to Christ

I want to give you six reasons why Christ triumphs over man-made philosophies, human wisdom, and self-focus

### **Six reasons why the message of Christ will bring peace to man in this fallen world**

1. **He is God vs. 9**
2. **He has made us complete vs. 10a**
3. **He is authoritative vs. 10b**
4. **He has transformed us vs. 11-13**
5. **He has borne our penalty vs. 14**
6. **He is triumphant vs. 15**

In the midst of this book to the Colossians there are great themes

- We see a wonderful picture of Christ. He is the one we seek to honor in our walk 1:10
- He is the one God the Father used to transfer us from the domain of darkness into Christ's kingdom vs 13
- He is God vs 15 and so much more in verses 15-20
- He is the source of all wisdom and knowledge 2:1-3
- In Christ then we have the power to live a transformed life Ch 3
- And He is the unifying factor to all Christian ministry Ch 4

*Here in Chapter two we find another compelling theme. Jesus Christ is the protector and preserver of our faith*

#### **1) He is God vs. 9**

*Because in Him resides all the fullness of the Godhead bodily vs 9*

All that God is, Christ is

All the glory God has Christ has

All the power God has Christ has

All the wisdom and knowledge God possesses Christ possesses

All the holiness God has Christ has

Christ is superior to human knowledge and wisdom because he is the source of all wisdom and knowledge. That is exactly what Paul said in verse 3

We are not seeking a man, we are not seeking the teachings of men. Peter said:

“For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty” (2 Peter 1:16)

- We are following God when we follow Christ
- Jesus is God and necessarily we have no right to show Him anything less than the full glory that is due Him
- Human wisdom, understanding, and the traditions of men will only lead us astray
- We are to seek Christ because He is God. In seeking Him we find protection from the empty deceptions of men

In following Christ, we follow the immutable, eternal, all knowing, and all-powerful God. The one who is too good to mislead us, too wise to fail us, too loving to harm us, too good to abuse us, too just to mistreat us, too merciful to withhold from us, and too gracious to cheat us.

- In following Christ man finds restoration to God’s perfect design for us

Here Paul reminds us that we draw near to Christ because in drawing near to Christ we are drawing near to the God of the universe

- No greater source than the Creator of the universe

By implication friends, more important to our daily spiritual lives than knowing God’s will for us, is knowing the God who has a will for us

## **2) He has made us complete vs. 10a**

How many of you feel complete? How many of you feel full and without void?

- each day we suffer the effects of sin
- We struggle with temptations
- We find ourselves in despair
- We find ourselves deficient of any kind of personal holiness
- Why is it so difficult to read the bible – it constantly puts our true condition on display. It is much easier reading a man who explains away a passage than it is to read the book and let it pierce the soul

- As we see our true condition, we see ourselves as anything but whole
- We don't feel whole or complete
- The world around us is in a tailspin away from God and the truth. Man is abandoning all reason for fleshly gratification and vengeance.

But in Christ we are perfectly complete

As one author put it:

As a result of the fall, man is in a state of incompleteness. He is spiritually incomplete because He is totally out of fellowship with God. He is morally incomplete because he lives outside of God's will. He is mentally incomplete because he does not know ultimate truth

At salvation believers become partakers of the divine nature and are made complete. They are spiritually complete because they have fellowship with God. They are morally complete because they recognize the authority of God's will. And they are mentally complete because they know the truth about ultimate reality

In Christ we stand perfectly righteous. In Christ we who were far off have been brought near. In Christ we who were at one time enemies have now been made to be children of God

Why would we seek anything else if we have been made complete in Christ?

Look, and listen carefully, if the devil can get you caught up with yourself rather than Christ he has won

Now listen, in the message of the gospel God makes us whole again

- We were dead in our sins and transgressions. We were guilty before God
  - In Christ we are made innocent as if we had never sinned against God
- We were unrighteous
  - In Christ we are seen as if we had done all of His good works
- We were spiritually dead
  - We have been regenerated by God and we call out in faith to Him
- We were enemies of God
  - In Christ we are now sons of God

We then seek Christ because

- He has filled our missing voids
- He has made us righteous
- He has given us the ability to stand before God
- He has given us renewed minds
- And He has made us useful to God again

In short, in Christ we are complete

“and in Him you have been made complete,” Col 2:10

### **3) He is authoritative vs. 10b**

He is the head over all rule and authority Col 2:10b

All governments, all rulers, all leaders, all men receive their authority from God

No man has authority unless God has granted it

Jesus responded to Pilate this way in John 19

"Pilate therefore said to Him, "You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?" <sup>11</sup> Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me up to you has *the* greater sin." (John 19:10)

**Here in Colossians Paul says that we are to develop all of our teaching according to Christ.**

We preach Christ because there is no one higher

We preach Christ because there is no one greater

We preach Christ because there is no one better

We preach Christ because there is no one purer

We preach Christ because there is no one more perfect

You see because of Christ's deity and because of his authority he has the right of exclusive worship and devotion. There is no one who will be able to stop Him from taking His glorious throne and bringing all things into subjection under His feet

- Even the demons knew the time for this was coming

#### **4) He has transformed us vs. 11-13**

Colossians 2:11 "and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,"

- Do not strip God of his glory, if you could have saved yourself Christ died needlessly
- Christ performed a work only He could accomplish

We are His workmanship

While we were dead in our sins. While we were rebellious, God rescued us

- We were dead and He made us alive together with Him
- A Dead man cannot rescue himself

- By being dead he is unable to respond to any outside influences. He is unresponsive
- God revived us and brought us to himself
- It is through Christ that we are born again

We have been born again, we have been lifted up, we have been transformed, the old man has been stripped away the new man has come

2 Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore if any man is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come”

We have by the work of God, through the Son, been transformed

Vs 11-12

- Baptism symbolizes our death and resurrection
- In baptism we go into the waters symbolizing our death and we come up symbolizing our new life
- We testify to the work of God in our lives to make us new

We then seek Christ because in him we have found a new life

But here in verse 13 we see the key. We are made alive with Christ and our sins are forgiven

- Here the word is a form of **χαρίζομαι**
- The idea of this word group for forgiveness is the gracious giving of release

Today people will not forgive others. They are not being told that they need to forgive. They do not see any reason to forgive

- Today people are getting mad over any personal slights or apparent slights
- They are seeking retribution
- They are seeking repayment for evil against them

Now this is where the Christian struggles to answer today’s problems. We are ashamed to call people to forgive

- When the racism discussion comes up, we are looked at as insensitive, uncaring, or even racist for suggesting and expecting that people must forgive

In fact, we are ashamed to speak of forgiveness

- It appears to be cheap and insensitive to teach someone to forgive

but when we understand our impossible debt, and when we understand there is no hope of restoration apart from repentance and forgiveness, then we must proclaim God’s message

- Today people need forgiveness.
- The more man moves away from God the more the corruption of his heart becomes evident and the more that he needs forgiveness and he needs to be taught to grant forgiveness

Today we are watching a culture that has lost the language of forgiveness. It is lost the desire to forgive. It is lost the need to forgive. It has lost its reason to forgive

- For this reason, we have a culture that will destroy itself because it will try to collect a debt which is impossible to collect and if they get any payment it will never be enough to repay the original harm or the amount of emotional distress to collect on the debt

*When the Church abandons the law of God, whether it was the OT Ten commandments or the NT law of love through Christ, it also will abandon forgiveness. Nothing reveals one's need for forgiveness more than the law just upheld*

In Christ man learns of His debt and his forgiveness and finds the basis to show forgiveness towards others

#### 5) **He has Borne our Penalty vs. 14**

How is our debt paid for? Christ bore our penalty

Do you know what man's biggest problem is?

- It is not a lack of money
- It is not a lack of love
- It is not a lack of self-worth
- It is not a DNA problem
- it is not a chemical problem
- It is not a social problem
- It is not systemic racism
- It is not white privilege
- It is not the lack of social justice

Man's biggest problem is sin and the law of God reveals that sin. God's righteous law stands firm and unalterable. It proclaims that we must obey. And yet the reality is we have disobeyed in every part

- He has born our penalty

Notice the text

Colossians 2:14 "having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us *and* which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross"

- These "decrees against us" are not the law of God. That would be antinomian
- These decrees are our personal violations of God's law and the verdicts of judgment against us

Look God's law rightfully stands over man condemning him for his sin. Each one of the commandments can bring a charge against us

- 1) The first commandment can say you have worshipped other God's before me
- 2) The second commandment will say you have made idols before me
- 3) The third commandment will say you have taken the Lord's name in vain
- 4) The fourth commandment will testify against us – you have broken the Sabbath
- 5) The fifth commandment will testify against us saying you have dishonored your parents
- 6) The sixth commandment will say you have committed murder
- 7) The seventh will testify to our committing adultery

- 8) The eighth will testify to our stealing
- 9) The ninth to our bearing false witness
- 10) The tenth to our coveting

While we may have not committed some of these things physically, we have committed these things in our hearts

The glory of our position in Christ is this, every violation, past present and future has been written down and nailed to the cross. Christ has borne or penalty. He has taken the punishment that should have fallen upon us, upon himself. We are justly condemned by the law and instead of removing the standard, Christ bore the punishment

We have been transformed by Christ as we have been set free because of Christ's work. We are now free to walk like free men. Why would we seek anything else?

- The gospel we preach sets man free from his eternal debt before God

#### **6) He is Triumphant vs. 15**

He walks victorious over all those who oppose him

Why would we align ourselves with the losing party?

Why would we align ourselves with those who are destined to be trampled underfoot?

Noticed the text

Because all those who align themselves with the devil will suffer the same fate as the Devil.

"When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him." (Col. 2:15 NAS)

- He marched them in as conquered foes
- He brought forth the spoils of victory
- In that victory parade will be the saints of God triumphing with God over the forces of evil

#### **Conclusion**

If I could sum up I would say this: if the teaching you are seeking does not lead you to Christ; if it does not exalt Christ; if it does not reveal Christ; if it does not honor Christ; if it does not teach the true Christ; then do not pursue it. For in the end you will be carried off captive by the empty deception of men

- Man's anger today is going to lead to destruction
- The unforgiving heart is going to lead people to destroy one another

We on the other hand, friends, seek Christ because in Him we are protected from the deceptions of men. If you want a simple test to determine the validity of a ministry or religious idea, look for their presentation of Christ. If he is absent maybe you should follow His lead

Many have been wondering how to respond to the various movements out there today. BLM

All Lives Matter

Blue lives Matter

His life Matters – Etc

I believe that BLM should be replaced with *Love Matters*

- Why would we restrict our message to one sin? That of racism
- We need to confront all sin. And only in Christ will we seek to end all sin
- Yes the hatred of any person for the color of their skin is wrong
- But let us remember that hatred of another person is simply one sin of many that need to be repented of

The law will show you the wickedness of your heart but it will never transform you

- People see the law as a general suggestion
- The Law is seen as suggested rules to be broken

Love Matters

- We are not for the love of one kind of person but for all people
  - We love God and love our neighbor
- We are not those who hate those who have hated you. We are those who love our enemies
- We are not those who take an eye for an eye. We are those who forgive
- We are not those who replace God with man. We are those

Love of God and love of Christ will lead to loving your neighbor

What we need today is the work of the law of Love on display in God's people

What our response in this day and age is to live out the love of God by keeping His commandments and loving the brethren. And we need to be proclaiming His message to the lost world. Through these means God will rescue those who are His