

"The Finished Work of Jesus Christ"

Part 1

Colossians 2:11-13

Introduction: One of the ongoing battles which the early church had to face was legalism. This came from the Judaizers who insisted that the Gentiles had to become like Jews in order to be saved. We have been looking at this attack in our study of Acts.

Acts 15:1-5

And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

² *When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.*

³ *And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.*

⁴ *And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.*

⁵ *But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.*

Paul addressed legalism when he wrote the book of Galatians.

Galatians 3:1-3

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

² *This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*

³ *Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?*

The churches in the Galatia region had to deal with the teaching of the Judaizers and so did the church at Colossae and the church at Laodicea. In the section we are in tonight we shall see how Paul addressed the teaching of legalism in the church.

➤ **New Creations in Jesus Christ**

Notice Colossians 2:10-11

Last week we finished with verse 10 and it was in that verse that Paul's focus went to Jesus. Now in verse 11 Paul confronts the teaching of legalism that would have insisted that these believers must be circumcised. Paul reminds them that they were circumcised but it was not external but it was internal and it was spiritual. This was the circumcision that mattered. The Jews pushed for the physical circumcision that was the cutting away of the flesh. But the physical circumcision was a picture of what God desired to do to every single person. The spiritual circumcision that Paul pointed to here was the cutting away of the flesh from the heart.

Before we were saved, we were completely controlled by the flesh. The lusts of the flesh controlled our hearts.

Ephesians 2:3

³ *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

But when we were saved the flesh was cut away from the heart. This is spiritual circumcision.

Romans 2:28-29

²⁸ *For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:*

²⁹ *But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.*

This was not a New Testament Truth for it is spoken of in the Old Testament.

Deuteronomy 10:12-16

¹² *And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul,*

¹³ *To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?*

¹⁴ Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is.

¹⁵ Only the LORD had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day.

¹⁶ Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.

It was the heart under the control of the flesh that kept them from bowing their heads to worship the Lord.

Notice Colossians 2:11

Paul tells them this circumcision is made without hands. This puts this in contrast with what the Jews demanded. They commanded the circumcision with hands on the outside of the body but this circumcision was by the Lord on the inside of the body. It is the putting off the body of sins of the flesh.

Notice Colossians 2:12

This is parallel with what Paul wrote in Romans 6.

Romans 6:2-8

² God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

³ Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

⁴ Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

⁶ Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

⁷ For he that is dead is freed from sin.

⁸ Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

Our sin nature was stripped of his power when we were saved. It is the cross and only the cross that the sin nature will submit to. We cannot bludgeon the flesh into submission. We

cannot follow a set of rules to overcome the flesh. The only thing that has power over the flesh is the cross.

Romans 6:11-14

¹¹ *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

¹² *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*

¹³ *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

¹⁴ *For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

Notice Colossians 2:13

God has reached down in the pit of sin and lifted us out and placed us in Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:1-7

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

² *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*

³ *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

⁴ *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,*

⁵ *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*

⁶ **And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:**

⁷ *That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.*

We are no longer the people we used to be.

2 Corinthians 5:17-18

¹⁷ Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

¹⁸ And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

Notice Colossians 2:13 again.

Paul tells us that our Lord has forgiven all our trespasses. Why does he use the word "trespasses" and not the word "sins"? What is the difference between sins and trespasses? The word "sin" means "to miss the mark." It was used of an archer who missed the target with his arrow. He may have tried his best but he was not able to hit his target. So, when the Bible calls us sinners it has the idea that we too have all missed the Mark. The mark is God's required perfection and no matter how much effort we put forth we all fall far short.

The word "trespasses" carries a different idea. It means "to step over the boundary or the line." It has the idea of knowing the limits but still proceeding to go beyond the permitted limits. This would be a reference to sins of a high hand, deliberate sins, or presumptuous sins. When trespasses are committed it is when we know the boundary but we cross over that boundary deliberately in an attempt to satisfy the lust of the flesh. Let us notice something in the Old Testament concerning presumptuous sins.

Numbers 15:27-36

²⁷ And if any soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she goat of the first year for a sin offering.

²⁸ And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the LORD, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him.

²⁹ Ye shall have one law for him that sinneth through ignorance, both for him that is born among the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them.

³⁰ But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

³¹ *Because he hath despised the word of the LORD, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him.*

³² *And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day.*

³³ *And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation.*

³⁴ *And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him.*

³⁵ *And the LORD said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp.*

³⁶ *And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the LORD commanded Moses.*

There was no sacrifice for willful sins. But for us there is. Jesus Christ went to the cross and He died not just for our sins but also for our trespasses. He has forgiven ALL of our trespasses. That would be past, present, and future.

Conclusion:

Next week we will get the details of what our Lord did for us in forgiving ALL of our trespasses. We have so much to be thankful for. We deserved to die and be sentenced to eternal damnation because we not only missed the mark but we also have a past of presumptuous sins. But God in His love made the choice to pursue us and save us so that we can have fellowship with Him.

Romans 5:8-10

⁸ *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

⁹ *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

¹⁰ *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*