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## **Be strong, Resist, Be free**

Colossians Chapter 2: We'll look at verses 11 to 23 today. We'll have corresponding thoughts from the book of Ephesians. And today will hopefully be some good thoughts for us. I love this because Paul is showing us how to live for him. And he goes through the truth of how to live and what it's based on. He then begins to tackle some areas of life that hinder us and lead us down the wrong path. Whether it be man-centered thinking or not, because verse 11 is a part of the chapter that began way back in verse 8, that's where it is. And it continues.

And he's picking up now with a new thought, or at least here. The Bible tells us that we were dead in our trespasses and sins. That takes us over to Ephesians chapter 2, verses 1 to 5. And that corresponds with what we're talking about here in Colossians. But we were dead spiritually. And so the Lord did things when he saved us. Here is one of the things that the Lord did that I didn't know anything about when I got saved. In him, you were also circumcised. When you get saved, you can think, "Yep, I knew that day. I knew that. I got circumcised in him." I doubt anybody thought that when they got saved. That happened when we got saved, but it's something that God has to teach us. There are a lot of things that happen the moment we get saved. And this is one of them.

I got thrilling news for some of you. We know males get circumcised for other reasons, this or that. Jewish ones do. And some of us, when we were babies, were circumcised. I think, in my case, they had to hold it off because I was born two pounds and 14 ounces. And I was in an incubator for about six weeks. And I was integrated way before a lot of you got integrated. There was an African-American girl in my incubator. She and I shared an incubator space together. I had to thrill my father. But anyway. I never knew what happened to her. You know, never knew. Anyway. I want us right off the bat.

I didn't borrow too much from Dr. Swindell this week. He has a great study on this particular chapter. I read and enjoyed it, but it didn't factor in outside of the information and got into my thinking.

But he says here in this particular application of these verses that we need to be strong in the Word of God and keep worshipping Christ. That is a key idea in going through any bad teachings or things people try to throw down your throat in your lifetime. You may encounter some of these horrible teachings. If

we stay strong in the Word of God and focus on Jesus, it will counter every false teaching we may do. Your heart can be settled on that.

Two, when you're offered the real thing, don't get into substitutes. Resist them. Refuse them.

And three, we'll talk a little more about this, but don't be afraid to risk living your life unshackled from lousy teaching. There are a lot of people who want to put people and bind them to evil thoughts. And people can get wrapped up in that, and suddenly, they can no longer operate. Sometimes, we have to know the truth, and when we see the truth, as Jesus said, it'll set us free where we are unshackled from these things. We'll understand what Paul means here, but keep these three applications in mind.

**Look at our first paragraph, 11 to 15, and see what that means.**

“And in him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands by putting off the body of sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptism, in which you were raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he has made alive together with him, having forgiven you of all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us, and he's taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. While on the cross, having disarmed principalities and powers, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphant over them in it.”

Now, here we were, dead, alive, forgiven, and there's triumph here, there's victory. Victory in Jesus, okay? It happened here. Now, let's get into a few ideas. Ladies, the other week, a couple of weeks ago, I called you brethren because that term includes all of us, alright? So, you're brethren when you see brethren, you're part of that, okay? Here, I don't know if this is new; you were circumcised. Now, we're talking about something not of this earth but something that happened spiritually. This was a circumcision not made without hands, and it dealt with the body of sins and the flesh, and that's the key idea.

All of us here have the flesh; we have the body of sins, which tells us that we were dead in our trespasses and sins. Go back to Ephesians; I want you to see it; keep your page in Colossians, and go back to Ephesians chapter 2, verse 1,

“And you were made alive who were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world.”

Now, in Colossians, the course of the world will be referred to as elementary things of the world, okay? We're talking about the same thing. So, you're walking according to the course of the world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit which now works in the sons of disobedience, and the course of the world and the elementary principles of the world, there's two ways of looking at that. The second one will be better, but one way we can look at the course of the world is that you and I have to live on this planet, and as long as we live on this planet, we've got to breathe. It's essential, you know, that we have to take in air, and oh, we've got to bring water, oh, we've got to take food, and as you noticed, it was snowing today. Sometimes, we have to take shelter, and we have to take care of ourselves because we're living on the planet, and we have to make adjustments here to live.

But probably a better way of looking at this world thing is we're talking about a Satan-centered operation,<sup>1</sup> where he rules the world with power, with military, with force, greed, and other things, and his rule as the prince of the air, he gets involved in Moscow. He gets involved in Washington, D.C. He's got a government building in Washington, D.C. One of them's over in the court, another at the White House, and another at Congress, but he's got an actual room in all those places. Oh, he's very much involved. And he's over in London, you know, he's over in Beijing, you know, wherever the world is making its decisions, Satan is involved, okay? He's got his minions in other places, but they're operating according to the principles and the teachings of the world, and here we're talking about Satan. And this works in the sons of disobedience, people who don't know the Lord.

Now, in verse 3 of Ephesians,

“Among whom also we were once conducted ourselves in the lust of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as others.”

Thank you, Lord, for verse 4-6

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,”

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<sup>1</sup> I am speaking metaphorically of course. Satan is where ever the seat of power is. He works within all political parties. Forget the red suit and pitchfork. He can appear as an angel of light.” He works in half truths and is a liar from the beginning. Satan is excellent in politics. Keep in mind he is a creature not the Creator.

That's what's going on here in Colossians chapter 2. It's the same truth, but hopefully, it helps to clear things up about what's happening here. So, we were circumcised where the flesh was cut away, and the body of sins was buried with him, and then we were raised up with him.

I'm back in Colossians now, vs. 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.

"Now, he also wiped out the handwriting of requirement." Most people understand this to be the law that witnesses to the fact that we're sinners. It was contrary to us. It's against us. It's not helping us get saved. It only points out our need to be saved. And he took that out of the way, having nailed it to the cross where he died for your sins. He took away the requirements you failed and nailed them on the cross. And there, you also died with him.

Now, baptism, like circumcision, happens when we're saved. It's the spiritual baptism. The water baptism is symbolic and a testimony. It's not the real thing. The real thing happened when you got saved. I didn't know anything about this stuff when I got saved. I only knew that God forgave me of my sins and gave me eternal life. That's all I knew. I knew it wasn't me. It was God. I couldn't do it. But I didn't know all of this.

But he did one more thing here. 15 "Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it." Satan<sup>2</sup> and the political powers thought that they were solving their problem by putting Jesus on the cross. Jesus, on the other hand, was going to solve the issues that were caused by sin and death. And he was going to solve it at the cross. And when God raised Jesus from the dead, he had victory over these principalities and powers. Wonderful. All this gave us an authentic walk with God, where we can walk with the Lord in him. Nothing is better than this reality that Paul is talking about here. And because of these truths, you and I now are alive in the

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<sup>2</sup> The Jewish leaders, Herod, Pilate did not realize that they were being used to advance Satan's cause to destroy the Messiah. Political leaders in a church, or in the world are usually not aware that they are pawns of a bigger battle spiritually being fought. Today it is man centered political theory that is opposed to God. It is thinking that elevates man or woman above God. Politics, law, philosophy, the arts and science can be God friendly and helpful and legitimate pursuits but we must be aware evil is there to bend it.

Spirit. Now that old flesh, that corpse, it stays with us all of our lives, doesn't it? But it's already dead. It's just staying with us. We no longer have sin and death ruling over us, but this flesh is going to eventually die.

But we were made alive. And we will go to be with the Lord in Heaven. And he's going to resurrect our bodies. These bodies are very biblical and scientific. These bodies go back to the earth. Nothing gets lost. So if my body gets burned up, there's nothing lost there. The energy transfers from one area to another.

Now, I have a cup of coffee, which I know many of you are just saying, "Isn't that wonderful?" Okay? But I want to talk about the water in it. They have realized that something in this water may return to the Garden of Eden. It gets recycled over and over and over again, and some atom from the Garden of Eden is in that water. It just gets recycled.

How long does it take water to go from Lake Superior to get to Niagara Falls? You know? I'll give you a number because I don't remember the exact number, but for over 250 years, it has taken water to go from Lake Superior to Niagara Falls. It takes a long time. Lake Superior and Lake Michigan are very deep. The other lakes aren't so deep. But they're deep waters. And that water has been recycled all the time.

Well, our bodies are going to get recycled.<sup>3</sup> How many want to go to heaven with your body that's in the grave? How many of you want that body? Oh, look at me. I'm one of those; what do they call those people, zombies? Okay? I'm a zombie now. Oh, isn't that cool? Look at my left arm, which just fell off. Oh. There went my eyeball. I mean, who wants that?

Now, there are things that I hate to see. Fool me once, fool me twice, oh, please. Not again. I had to go to so many exhibits to see the mummies because, you know, we were taking kids up to the museum to see these things. And I had to go in with these kids to see these mummies. I hated it. I got the idea the first time I went; oh, disgusting. I don't want to look like this. You know? That was a girl. You know? I mean, you know. And then to know that those bodies, the brains, had been taken out of them from the very beginning. They, you know, took them out through the nose. But regardless, that's eternity? No thanks.

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<sup>3</sup> Ponder this. By the time the Lord returns, our bodies may be recycled many times. So when the Lord returns and re-creates our resurrected bodies, we are dealing with the Creator who will make it happen with His word. We don't have to worry how God does it. But in heaven, we may learn how he did it. But in heaven, we may learn how he does it.

God is going to do something much better. But when we get this resurrected body, the same God who created the world out of nothing's going to recreate our resurrected bodies. They're going to be new. They're going to be resurrected. And they're going to be made to live forever. They're not even the bodies that we have now. No, they're not that stuff. They're bodies that are made for heaven. He's just going to remake them. He's going to find out. I'll pick on Steve here. He likes attending baseball games, so he probably won't do this. But Steve and his son go fishing somewhere in the Pacific. And while they're fishing, a great orca eats both of them. And they both get eaten by the orca. And, you know, they get, you know, they get processed in the orca's body. Eventually, they end up at the bottom of the ocean. You know? And, uh, but because they know Christ is their Savior, they will get resurrected. So somewhere in that big ocean where they've been spread around, God will recreate their new bodies. Now, they're not going to go out in that ocean.

My son will never go to Australia. So many things could kill you there: sharks, crocodiles, snakes, insects, jellyfish, etc. It's just not going to happen.

God is going to do that. It's a miracle. So this reality of we were buried, we died, and we're raised again, there's now a new life in us. We're living by the Holy Spirit. That's the reality.

## **Paragraph # 2**

16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. 18 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God. Verse 8 tells us, "Beware lest anyone cheat you." NKJV

Now, verse 16, "Don't anybody judge you," and verse 18, "Let no one cheat you." Don't let 'em do that. You see, what we're talking about here are a couple of things, but they are only a shadow. Now, I see shadows down this row from the light coming this way and casting shadows, including your chair and you sitting there. That's what this is talking about. It's not the you; it's the shadow that's cast. And these things are just a shadow if you like. I think of a vapor, something that's - but it's less than a vapor. A vapor has, you know, actual cells. A shadow is a good word.

Don't let anybody judge you regarding understanding festivals, new moon, or Sabbaths. Now, a Sabbath is a holy day, but the Sabbath is not practiced in the church. Many things are a shadow of what is to come because what is to come is real. The substance is of Christ.

You've got the tabernacle. You know, in Israel, we have a model of it. I can't wait. If I ever go to Israel, that's where I'm heading. And if I can put a tent down there for a while and be there for a couple of days, I'll ensure I have a lot of water and things to drink. And if I could just be there and imagine what it was like to have the fire at night where everything was lit up. They probably got a lot of lights there, so everything was lit. But anyway, the fire that came out. And then in the daytime, you had this great big cloud from the fire, and it gave everybody shade, and they were protected. And there, they got to worship the Lord. And the tabernacle is filled with tremendous meaning about glorifying God. But as wonderful as it was, that tabernacle was only a copy of something in heaven. That's the real thing.

And it's this way with Christ. He's the real deal. That's why we don't accept substitutes. Be strong in God's Word and keep worshipping the real thing, Christ. That's where this comes from. Now, they're going to cheat you out of your reward. They're going to try to give you some religious concept that you follow that's going to cheat you from the real thing. They're going to take delight in false humility.

Worship of angels. For a minute here, what is the worship of angels? If you were to worship angels today, what would that be? Besides wrong. Idolatry. Smack dab idolatry. Now, what angels do you think that they're worshipping here? Well, let's return to the principalities and powers Christ defeated. Those are the angels, the demons. That's who they're worshipping. They're including things that are not seen. Mystical revelations by the fleshly mind. Ooh, they're important. I had these revelations. I had these visions. There are many cults and religions based on these things.

But they weren't holding fast to Christ, who is the Head. From that Head is Christ's body, and the body's growth comes from God. Don't let people cheat you with these false things.

### **Paragraph #3**

20Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations—21 “Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,” 22which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men?

23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

Therefore, if you died with Christ, verse 20, from the basic principles of the world, talked about that, as though living in the world, why do you subject yourself to some do not touch, do not taste, do not handle all things, concerned things which perish with using whatever the value, they're temporary.

Remember signs saying, "Don't walk in the grass." At my grandmother's house, there were times when my brother and I were prohibited from going into the parlor. We were not allowed. My grandmother probably had good reasons for that. Her parlor is long gone. It doesn't exist anymore. The grass has changed. Other things are there. They don't last. They're temporary. So do the teachings on the commandments of the doctrine of men. They have only limited experience. As I capture this, these things appear to be wisdom and self-imposed religion, false humility, which is enormous now, and neglect of the body. These people were taught to hate the body. They think it's evil. Therefore, everything about the body is bad.

But that's not the truth. How long have we lived and walked in these bodies? This body has been my friend. It's been with me through thick and thin. It has value. The things God wants to do through me in this body have eternal value. God created the body. We look at it; the eyes, the ears, and everything about our body are fearfully and wonderfully made. If someone teaches you need to punish the body. Or you could put jewelry on your body, which digs into your skin when you put it on your body. And as it digs into your skin, it causes you pain. No thanks. I don't want that jewelry. I don't like that pain. I got enough pain. I don't need that.

Notice "but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh." I went to a service once. I couldn't believe it. And this service was so confusing. It was in a pole building, bigger than our room here, but at one corner of it, it had this going on. Another corner had this going on. And over here, it had this going on. So I told my piano player that I was with to grab all the kids. I don't think they mind. Grab all the kids, and we'll present the gospel here. Throw one more thing in to be doing in this room. Oh, they were doing so much.

However, one of the things that they were doing was a ministry called "Slaying the Spirit." Now, you have to see it to believe it. Robin Williams talks about it in some of his comedies, but it's where they hit you with the palm of the hand here, right in the middle of your Head. And you're, I don't, please don't let



me do that again. But they'd hit you with the bottom of the Head right there. And you're standing, and then you start rocking, and then you fall straight back like a plywood board. A little bit of shaking and all that kind of stuff.

Well, I was noticing that. I'm going, no, why would anybody want to do that? I mean, that looked very hurtful. So, anyway, we had a Bible study across the street from Joliet Central. It was an old, rickety building between the school and the church. But it was on that corner, and it was an old building. And there were many people there, and it was like a Jesus people meeting. So I went there, and while I was there, I ran into one of the guys who was slain in the Spirit. And I said to him, what's all that about? And he said, well, that's, you know, I sinned last week, and then I died. And now I, you know, have victory. And as he says this, he is still smoking a cigarette. I said, well, what about that cigarette? Oh, that's a sin, he said. I said that didn't seem to help you at all. He says, well, I'll get slain this week. I said you're going to do it again. Oh, man. So I told him, "Listen, what you're doing has no value in becoming more spiritual. What you're doing doesn't work. That's what I told him. I didn't quote this verse, but that's what this is saying.

So in the reality versus, you know, the things that are just a shadow or even made up, go back to Christ. Go back to the word. Return to the idea that you died with Christ, and He made you alive. The flesh controlled you, and you walked according to the flesh, but then Christ came, and you began to walk in the Spirit. That's the way to do it. Walk in the Spirit. Walk in the newness of life. That's the reality. And then you will have victory over sin and everything like that. You will go through your whole life experiencing many more things, such as victory. God will keep showing you areas to work on, but the beauty is you grow because it tells us here that "we hold fast to the head from whom the body nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments grows with the increase that's from God." That's the reality. That's what we want. I hope that for you all. Okay? We're alive today in Jesus Christ. We've been born again. Our home is heaven. We walk here just like Abraham in temporary tents, looking forward to the day when everything will be fulfilled and we will forever experience the reality in heaven. But until then, we can learn to walk in the Spirit today. We've talked about that, but all of these things come from Paul's teachings, and as we put them together, they make more and more sense.

Let's pray. Lord, I pray that as we look at these words, we might apply the fact that we were not to be strong in the word. We want to resist what is false, Lord, and we wish to continue to live for you and have victory. We should not let these bad ideas, wherever they come from, from the traditions of men and

women, trap us into unnecessary focus and even obedience. God, help us be unshackled from all these un-useful things to get to what counts as we learn to walk with you in love, joy, peace, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control, meekness, and kindness—all these things, Lord, and more that you give us where we can have victory. Help us, Lord, to focus on our walk with the Lord. Help us look into God's word every day where you teach us and help us make these things more real in our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.