

Colossians, Chapter Two, Lesson Three

REMINDING THE FLOCK Colossians 2:11-15

STIMULATE

** As last week's study came to a close, we observed three ways in which the apostle Paul had shown himself to be "**Protecting the Flock**". Do you recall those three ways?

- 1) He made sure that our walk matches our talk, that we walk in truth. Our lifestyle can be used to silence the mouths of the critics! cf. 1Peter 2:15
- 2) To keep our thinking held captive by Jesus Christ and rejecting the foolish speculations of human philosophy. cf. Colossians 3:16, 2Corinthians 10:5
- 3) To remember that on a spiritual level, we have been made complete in Christ and nothing anyone can do will be able to shake that marvelous reality. cf. Romans 8:31

Those powerful proclamations from God's Word keep us victorious and protected in the cause of Christ.

MOTIVATE

** As Paul continues in our passage for today, he will employ a method which is used throughout the New Testament epistles - that is the method of reminding. When the apostle Peter wrote his second letter he said, "And I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder" (2Peter 1:13). Today we are privileged to learn from Paul as we see him "**Reminding the Flock**" of how God has blessed them with their new life in Christ. Let's read the passage together.

Read passage (V.11-12) (V.13-15)

Opening Prayer

Reminding the Flock

INVESTIGATE

V.11 ** Last week we learned that all the fulness of Deity dwelt in the body of Jesus Christ, that we have been made complete in Him and that He is head over all. Of what additional reality does Paul now remind his readers concerning their position "in" Christ?

They have been circumcised "in Him".

** Was Paul referring to a surgical procedure?

No, this circumcision comes only through faith in Jesus Christ and was "made without hands".
cf. Acts 7:51 and Romans 2:28-29

** Paul's metaphorical use of the practice of circumcision was important because of the view held by many of the false teachers in his day which said that you could only become saved if you literally were circumcised (Acts 15:1). What does this "circumcision of Christ" accomplish according to Paul?

"...the removal of the body of the flesh..."

** What does Paul have in mind with that statement?

He is referring to the sinful, fallen human nature which totally dominated us before our salvation and how it can be removed through faith in Christ.

All see - Romans 6:5-11; We are freed from sin and made alive to God

Galatians 5:19-21 and 24; While the flesh still has the potential of influencing our actions, we can choose to deny it.

Colossians 3:5; We will be successful as we consider ourselves as "dead" to the temptations of flesh.

V.12 ** Having reminded the Colossians of this great work of Christ on their behalf, of what does he remind them next?

They had been "buried with Him in baptism".

** Is Paul suggesting that you cannot be saved by literal circumcision, but you can be saved if you will just get baptized?

No - Both would amount to legalism, or salvation by works.

cf. Romans 6:1-4, 1Corinthians 10:1-4, 1Peter 3:21

** Then what does Paul add here in verse 12 to let us know he is talking about a spiritual baptism?

Our burial and our being raised up with Christ is all done through faith in the working of God.

V.13 ** As Paul continues "**Reminding the Flock**", he takes them back to the beginning. How does he describe their pre-Christ life?

They "were dead in [their] transgressions and the uncircumcision of [their] flesh".

cf. Ephesians 2:1,11-12

** Why would Paul spend time reminding them of their former state, that which they lived in before becoming Christians?

For the purpose of comparison! Knowing that we have been saved for all eternity, is only good news when compared to the dark sin of our hearts and the eternal judgment which was upon our souls prior to God's saving grace delivering us into the light of His kingdom.

Remember: Colossians 1:13-14

** Fortunately, Paul does not leave them dwelling on their dark, hopeless past. Of what does he remind them next concerning their new life?

God made them (and us) "alive together with Him". All see - Ephesians 2:4-7

God: made us alive with Christ (V.5)

raised us up with Him (V.6)

seated us with Him in glory (V.6)

will show us kindness in Him (V.7)

** Back in verse 13 of our text for today, Paul adds one more amazing thing to our remembrance, what is it?

He wants to remind us that God has "forgiven us all our transgressions".

paraptoma is the word used here by Paul for transgressions and literally means "a false step". It comes from a root word, parapipto, meaning "to fall in".

** How much of our stumbling around in sin has our gracious God forgiven?

All of it! Now that is a wonderful thing and should cause our hearts to rejoice.
cf. Psalm 32:1 with Acts 10:43

V.14 ** That, of course is wonderful, but did we really owe something simply because we are sinners?

Yes! We had a "certificate of debt".

That phrase literally means "something written with the hand", or "an autograph". It was used to refer to a certificate of indebtedness handwritten by the debtor in acknowledgment of his debt.

There is a great song which states, "He paid a debt He did not owe, I owed a debt I could not pay. I needed someone to wash my sins away".

** What did that debt look like, was it just a general reality that I missed the mark of God's glory?

Absolutely not! It was a specific list "consisting of decrees against" me.
cf. Matthew 12:36, Revelation 20:12

** Where these decrees kind of neutral in their presentation against our character?

No they were "hostile to us". We were our own worst enemy!

** Twice in this verse, Paul proclaims the same great news but in a different way. What is the good news regarding our debt?

- 1) It has been canceled - Romans 6:23
- 2) He has taken it out of the way - Psalm 103:12

** Before leaving verse 14, we must examine how this wonderful transaction took place. Where did God place our certificate of debt?

"...having nailed it to the cross".

We are all familiar with 2Corinthians 5:21 where "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him". When those nails pierced our Lord's hands and feet, they were literally nailing our sin to that cross through the substitution of the Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world.

V.15 ** We do not always appreciate the spiritual ramifications of that moment in history. What did God accomplish by placing His Son on the cross?

He "disarmed the rulers and authorities" in the heavenly places.
cf. Ephesians 6:12, 1John 3:7-8

** Besides defeating Satan and his hosts at the cross, what else did God do?

"...He made a public display of them..." There was a place and time in which Satan and his hosts were displayed as having lost the battle.

** Do we know where or when that took place?

The apostle Peter gives us an insight to this majestic moment for God.
All see - 1Peter 3:18-20

V.18 - The physical body of Jesus died, while His spirit (God incarnate) lived.

V.19 - Christ goes to the abyss and "publicly" proclaims his victory over Satan, sin and death during His three days in the tomb. cf. Luke 8:31

V.20 - The audience was the demonic forces which God destroyed, along with the earth, who had polluted the earth with continual sin by mixing with the daughters of men. cf. Genesis 6:2-4, Job 1:6, Jude 1:6-7

** Finally, back in our passage for today, how does Paul say that God was able to triumph over this massive demonic force?

"...having triumphed over them **through Him...**"

We have so much for which we should give thanks, but the greatest is for our beloved savior, Jesus Christ, through whom God gave us the victory.

EXTRICATE

** Let's recall the things on Paul's list, with which he felt it necessary to spend time **Reminding the Flock**.

They were:

- 1) We were circumcised in our heart through faith in Jesus Christ.
- 2) We were buried with Christ and raised with Him through faith "in the working of God".
- 3) God made us alive, when we were dead in our transgressions.
- 4) God has forgiven us all our transgressions.
- 5) God canceled and removed our debt, by nailing it to the cross of Christ.
- 6) Christ was victorious in paying for our sin and satan knows it!

DELINEATE

** As you review that list, which ones could you use in "**Reminding the Flock**" about what they have gained in Christ Jesus.

Obviously, we could use them all. But perhaps one or two of them stand out as special or new in your thinking.

EVALUATE

** Are you willing to share these great truths? While reminding others, who else will you be keeping up-to-date on these important issues regarding Christ?

We can remind our own hearts as we share with others. We have no room for discouragement, when we consider the wonderful truths we learned together in this passage.

ACTIVATE

** Father help us to spend our days **Reminding the Flock** of Your great truth and the victory You won for us through the work of Christ on the cross.

Closing prayer