

Unshakeable- Colossians 2:9-15 It is Finished, 2/6/2017

While we might not know every word by Jesus or have all the verses memorized, most of us here remember the last words of Jesus on the cross before he died. IT IS FINISHED. In uttering these words Jesus was saying far more than just, my life is expired. Jesus was making a theological, cosmic, eternal and personal declaration that his saving work is finished, accomplished, complete. Paul picks up on this truth and its implications in our passage today, Colossians 2:9-15. What we are going to see Paul do is argue against the doctrine of the false-teachers. The false teachers were saying, Jesus isn't sufficient, you aren't complete in Jesus. Not sufficient for salvation, not a sufficient for your identity, for victory... Their teaching was Jesus+. Jesus+Knowledge, Jesus+Angels, Jesus+Religious Rituals, Jesus+Works.

And what Paul is going to do is convincingly show us that it is Jesus+Nothing. Look at what he says.

Colossians 2:9-10

9 *For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, **10** and in Christ you have been brought to fullness.* That word Fullness means completion. The fullness of Christ has filled, completed us. He is going to go on for the next 5 verses to demonstrate three ways we are complete in Jesus. I'm going to move through these quickly but then we will slow down to ask the question, what difference does this make in my life. The first thing Paul wants us to know-

1) We are a Completely Accepted in Jesus (v.11-13a)

To argue his point Paul uses two symbols, two metaphors if you will, Circumcision and Baptism.

11 *In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ...**13** When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ.*

Now timeout. This makes absolutely no sense if we think of modern day circumcision...merely a medical procedure for boys that has some hygienic benefits. Circumcision was the external sign of the covenant between God and his people, this marked the people (the men as representatives of their families) as set apart and committed to God. But the Jewish people had a propensity to assume that because they received a medical procedure that they were acceptable to God. That is how you get in with God, even if their hearts were far from him. But the Lord has always looked on the inside. He's always been more concerned with our hearts.

Jeremiah 4:4

Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, circumcise your hearts, you people of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem.

And Paul is repeating this same thing. That what brings salvation, what makes us acceptable to God is not an external surgery, but it is a spiritual surgery of the heart. And verse 11 and 13 were particularly aimed against the false-teachers who were saying that in order to be accepted by God it was Jesus+Circumcision. In Galatians Paul gets really in the face of the false teachers, and essentially says if you think Circumcision makes you more acceptable to God why stop there, why not cut the whole thing off... But notice what Paul says, "If you are in Christ, if you have believed in Christ, you have already been circumcised... not with hands like a surgeon... but God has done spiritual surgery. Through faith in Christ, God cuts out our old heart and give us a new one that is acceptable and pleasing to Him. This is also called the New Birth (John 3), New creation (Paul)

The second symbol, metaphor is baptism.

Colossians 2:12

having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

Baptism is a symbol of the union of a believer with Christ. The word simply means placed into. The moment you placed your faith in Christ you were placed by the Spirit into a union, a marriage with Christ and all believers, his body (1 Corinthians 12:13). Water baptism is the beautiful picture of this spiritual baptism. When you became a Christian it is as if you were buried, you died and you rose again in new life. Just as God raised Jesus, so he raised you from the dead when you believed in Christ. We are accepted into the family of God by the finished work of Christ on the cross.

So when taken together Paul is telling these believers- you need no further religious rituals, no other religious works to make you eternally accepted by God. It is finished. Jesus did it. It is Jesus+Nothing.

Application- Is there anything you are adding to the equation of being eternally and completely accepted by God? Jesus+

2) We are Completely Forgiven in Jesus (v.13b-14)

He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.

This is so rich, I don't know whether I can give it all it deserves, spend some time on these verses. These are just loaded.

Interpreted as Legal Indebtedness, "handwritten ordinances against us"... here's the word picture- On my 18th birthday got pulled over for speeding. Said to the officer, it's my birthday...can I get a break? He said, "Here's your charge, you will owe \$120. Consider it a gift from the state of PA." That's basic idea here... Legal, Handwritten

charges that stand against you. Now it's one thing if it is a fine, I pay it off...and I move on with my life.

But what happens if the charges against you cannot be paid off, and you are completely incapable of doing enough good to make up for them? That is what Paul is saying. In the courtroom of heaven we all have broken the divine law of God because of our sin. We stand guilty, deserving the eternal death penalty. Romans 6:23 *The wages of sin is death.*

Now here's what is mind-blowing- God because of his mercy and love toward us says, "I will place your charges against my divine law, your whole rap sheet, on one man's account for all eternity, Jesus."

And the imagery, "nailing it to the cross" in verse 14 comes from the Roman law. In crucifixion the Romans would nail the handwritten legal charges against the person being crucified above them on the cross. These charges are what brought their condemnation. For Jesus, it said, "King of the Jews" that was his charge. But what Paul is saying is that God nailed all of our charges above that cross and crucified them with Jesus. Wiped them out, like they never existed. So when Jesus says, It Is Finished- that word literally means- Paid in Full. Praise Jesus!

And it is because we have been eternally, completely forgiven by God in Jesus that Paul concludes:

3) We are Completely Victorious in Jesus (v.15)

15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

We need to understand that Satan and the demons are limited creatures bound by time and limited in knowledge. They didn't know God's hidden plan of salvation of sinners through Jesus. All they knew was God's divine law that stood condemning mankind and they gloried in that. Now Jesus was a threat to their power... As Christ was suspended on the cross, no doubt the demons were having a party, seeing him bound hand and foot to the wood in apparent weakness and defeat, they imagined he was their victim. This is exactly what C.S. Lewis portrayed as Aslan was bound, beaten, mocked and killed on the stone table. What these powers and authorities didn't know is that the cross, the instrument of death and shame, became the victor's triumphal chariot.

Rome's military heroes would be given a parade when they came back home and in this parade would be the victors, treasures and weapons that they pillaged... and the captives... who would do a walk of shame... because they were defeated. They were made a public spectacle. This is the imagery of what Christ accomplished in his victory on the cross.

He's saying- If you are in Christ, you are completely and eternally victorious! We know how the war ends, we win! That doesn't mean we don't have battles. But it means that Christ we overcome, he gives us strength and equips us to fight the battle, and the ultimate victory has been won... that is why Paul exclaims at the end of 1 Corinthians 15, "Oh death where is your victory? oh death where is your sting?"

Application- Are you living as if you have been defeated or as a victor?

So in summary, the false teachers were saying that Jesus is not sufficient, that we are not complete in Jesus. Jesus+. To that Paul says, no it's Jesus+nothing, it is finished!. We are complete in Jesus. We are completely accepted, we are completely forgiven and we are completely victorious in Jesus.

So here's the question- Are you trying to add anything to the finished work of Jesus Christ? Something that would make you more accepted, more forgiven, more victorious, more complete?

-Works, if I do enough

-Religious rituals

-Or is there something on your wrap sheet of sin that you deep down believe God hasn't forgiven you for?

Activity on the cross