



The Sermon

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Colossians 1:13-14

"The Heart of the Gospel"

April 30, 2023

TRANSCRIPT

So, having said that, take your Bible and turn with me to the book of Colossians, Colossians chapter 1. And today we're in verses 13 and 14. If you're visiting with us, welcome; we love having you here. And we are in the midst of a marvelous study of the book of Colossians. And it is our practice to move verse by verse through books in the Bible, and not just chunks by chunks, but verse by verse, and at times, even word by word, which is what we will be doing today. The title of today's message is "The Heart of the Gospel. The Heart of the Gospel." And as always, I want to begin by reading the passage that will be the focus of our study this day.

Colossians 1:13, "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." There is so much gold in this goldmine, that I want us to look carefully into this text today. But first, we need to go to the author, we need to go to the Lord; so let us go to Him.

[Prayer] Father, as Your Word has been read, it is our desire to study this portion of Your Word. And as always, we are in need of the Helper, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, to be our instructor, to be our primary teacher. So I pray that He would have an active ministry in the minds and in the hearts of everyone here today, and that You would use me simply as a tool or an instrument that You've picked up to be a far lesser, secondary teacher of this passage of Scripture. I pray that You would bring much

encouragement and much strength to us today from this passage. And for any here today who have not yet committed their life to Jesus Christ, I pray that today would be the day. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. [End]

In these verses the apostle Paul presents to us one of the most succinct statements found anywhere in the Bible concerning the heart of the gospel. The doctrine of justification by faith alone is the hinge of the gospel, as per John Calvin; but in these verses we find the heart of the gospel. Here is, in part, what God the Father and God the Son have done for us in Their saving works.

When most of us were converted, we did not understand all these truths. When most of us were converted – and I would include myself in this. I just knew I was a great sinner, and I knew that Christ was a great Savior; and there was such an attractiveness about the beauty of Christ's holiness and His grace, that I was just drawn to Christ as a 17-year-old young man, and I gave my life to Christ, and I committed my life to Christ, really not even understanding all the nuances of these two verses that I just read. I just knew I belonged to the Lord now, and I had the assurance of my salvation. You could have never talked me out of it; God had done a real work in my soul.

And I began to voraciously read my Bible. I began to take it to class. I began to study it at night and read it at night; and the more I read, the more I began to learn about what it was that God did in my life, and I began to learn about all that God had done in my life, and it was extraordinary; I just couldn't get enough of it, I couldn't get to the bottom of it, I mean, "What else do I need to know?"

And so, as we grow as Christians, we grow not just in the grace, but in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. And none of us have arrived, by the way. I mean, we're all just in process, and we're all, relatively speaking, just starting this journey of learning all that is in the Scripture and what God has done for us. And the more we read our Bibles, the more we realize that God has done so much more for us than we ever realized. And the more

I read my Bible, I realize that I was even far worse off than I thought I was, and that God had to reach down to the bottom of the barrel to find me and to lift me up to heavenly places.

And so these two verses are really just another step forward into understanding what all God has done for us when He saved us. If you're a Christian, if you're a believer today, I trust that as you look at this, you will come to realize, "This is my life story. This is my testimony. This is what God has done in my life. This is very personal to me. This is very real to me." And so as we look at verses 13 and 14 – and that's all we're going to look at, and I hope I can get this all in in this one message. This could become a series, okay? They laughed at the early service when I said that, and you took me seriously. But you can't laugh if you don't get it, okay. So, think about it.

So, there are four things here that I see that God and Christ have done for us in our salvation, and I want you to treasure this today. I want you to rejoice in this today. When church is over and we leave here, I want you to almost just be skipping back to your car with your heart pounding with excitement for what God has done in your life. So let's walk through this.

Beginning in verse 13, the first of these four is, "God rescued us. God rescued us." Now look at verse 13, it starts with the word "for." And I want to bring this to your attention: there are more verses in the 13 epistles that Paul wrote, more verses that begin with the word "for" than any other word that he uses. And the word "for" introduces an explanation of what he just wrote. It's an explanation of the previous verse.

And so as he begins verse 13, "For," he is explaining why, in verse 12, we should be giving thanks to God. When we give thanks to God, it never takes place in an intellectual vacuum. Praise never occurs with a mindless vacuum. There are always reasons for our praise. There are always hard, fast reasons that we should give thanks to God. And so verse 13 really introduces four reasons why we should rise up and give thanks to God today. In fact, this would be a great Thanksgiving sermon, to be honest.

So, he begins, "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness." I have to draw this to your attention. The word "He" refers to God the Father. The antecedent of "He" is in the previous verse. In the previous verse it is the Father, "giving thanks to the Father." Why? "For He rescued us." And the reason I want to just drill down on that is for my own conscience.

I preached this text some 20 years ago and I mistook the "He" for Christ; and it wasn't until I went back and reread the passage again once I got home. I realized I totally missed who the "He" is, and so I had them take the sermon down off of the church website. And so today is my day of redemption. Today, God of a second chance, okay. So I'm Jonah, God of a second chance. So my conscience is now clear.

"For He" - God the Father - "rescued us." And the word "rescued" here means to be delivered from great danger, that there was a great threat upon my life and upon your life, and God rescued us. In Romans 11:26, God is referred to simply as "the Deliverer." God is a delivering God. God is a rescuing God. In 1 Thessalonians 1:10, the Bible reads that "God rescues us from the wrath to come." You need to be rescued, I need to be rescued from the condemnation and judgment of God.

Now, please continue to read this verse. Here the emphasis is upon, really, the context in which we found ourselves, "from the domain of darkness," out of the domain of darkness. The word "domain" here, really, speaks to a kingdom. It refers to a ruling authority with power. And the domain of darkness refers to the kingdom of darkness, the realm where sin and Satan reign; and that is this evil world system in which we once lived. We once were a part of the corrupt world system over which Satan ruled as the god of this age and the prince of this world, and we were held captive by the devil to do his will.

Even if you grew up in church, before you were converted, you were still a part of the domain of darkness. And if you want to know what's wrong with the world today, it's just right here. The world is the domain of darkness.

Darkness refers to ignorance of God. Darkness refers to immorality and licentiousness and greed and envy. It refers to everything that is anti-God, anti- Christ, anti-truth, anti everything that is good and holy. And you and I were once a part of this system. In fact, we were held in chains of darkness, and we were held captive by sin and by the devil, until we were converted. And at the moment of our conversion, it is as though God just - there was a dramatic, divine intervention, and God crashed into our lives, and it is as though He laid hold of us, and lifted us up out of this foul sewer of this world.

God is a rescuing God, and it is out of this context of the domain of darkness that every one of us, every single one of us have been rescued. But there's an even larger context, and it is very simply this, that God has rescued us from Himself. God has rescued us from God, strange as that sounds. The grace of God has rescued us from the wrath of God; and it is only God who can save from God, and it is only the grace of God that can save from the wrath of God. And God has done this, and God has done this through the power of the cross. God has done this by sending His Son into this world, and we will look at that in verse 14.

Verse 13 is all about God the Father, verse 14 is all about God the Son, and They work together in tandem and perfect alliance in our salvation. This is why when we baptize, we baptize in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. And it's more than just a recognition of doctrinal orthodoxy, it is a statement of our belief about the doctrine of our salvation, that God the Father saved us, and God the Son saved us, and God the Holy Spirit saved us. All three Persons of the Trinity were vitally a part of our salvation. It was the Father who chose us before the foundation of the world. It was the Father who designed the plan of salvation, the gospel of Christ. It is the Father who commissioned His Son to come into this world to lay down His life for us. It is the Father with the Son who sent the Holy Spirit into the world to open our eyes and open our ears to the gospel truth.

The Lord Jesus Christ is a Savior; we know that John 4:42, "He's the Savior of the world," and we will look at that in just a moment in verse 14. He has redeemed us, and He has forgiven us all of our sins through the blood of

His cross. But God the Holy Spirit is also a Savior. He is the one who convicted us of sin. He's the one who drew us to Christ. He's the one who regenerated us. He's the one who gave us the gift of repentance and faith. He's the one who sealed us in Christ. He's the one who's come to live inside of us. And there are some churches that are doctrinally heretical, who only baptize in the name of Jesus Christ; and they deny the Trinity really. They deny the deity of Christ, strangely enough, as they baptize only in the name of Christ.

But we baptize in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, because all three Persons of the Trinity are vitally our Savior. In John 10:30, Jesus said, "I and the Father are one." He does not mean one in person, He means one in purpose, one in mission, one in saving enterprise. And the Father and the Son along with the Spirit, They work in perfect harmony and unity in this matter of salvation, though They each have individual roles in our salvation. And here, Paul is emphasizing that it is the Father who has rescued us.

Let me give you one other passage off the top of my head, Romans 8:29-30, "Those whom He foreknew, He predestined; and those whom He predestined, He called; and those whom He called, He justified; and those whom He justified; He glorified." Here's the question: Who's the "He"? It's not They, it's He. It's a singular pronoun. It's God the Father. He's the one who foreknew us. He's the one who predestined us. He is the one behind the calling of the Spirit. He is the one who justifies us, certainly. And He is the one who glorifies us.

So, Paul here brings great attention to God the Father. And as you consider your salvation, remember it is a Trinitarian salvation – all three Persons actively involved in rescuing you.

But second, not only God rescued us, but second, "God relocated us." As we continue to read in verse 13, after he says, "He rescued us from the domain of darkness," – notice – "and" – and the word "and" is very important because it signifies that all of this is true. These are all like links in a

chain. This isn't that we get two out of the four, we all receive all four of these benefits. No one is more saved than anyone else in this room today.

So, "He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and" - here's the keyword - "transferred, transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son." Now this word "transferred" in the original language means to be moved from one place to another location. It's a relocation from one place to another place. The word means to transpose, to carry away, to remove; and it's used, for example, in 1 Corinthians 13:2, "If I have all faith, so as to remove mountains," well, God has removed us out of the domain of darkness, and He has removed us into the kingdom of His beloved Son.

Let me give you one more example of how this word "transferred" is used. It was used to describe a powerful king who would invade another country and thoroughly defeat them and carry them all back to his homeland to make them his slaves, and to become their servants. In fact, this was used to describe the king of the Assyrian Empire, who came down from the north and invaded the Holy Land, and multiple times, but captured the tribes that were to the east of the Jordan River, and just captured them and took them back to Assyria to become his slaves.

That's the picture here of the word "transferred," that God has invaded human history in the Person of His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, and He has sent His Son on a rescue mission to deliver us from the domain of darkness and to transfer us into the kingdom of His beloved Son, such that we're not just suspended during our Christian life in no man's land waiting to go to heaven, and then one day enter into the kingdom of God. No. Right now, the moment you're converted, you are taken captive by God, and transferred into the kingdom of His Son to become His slaves, to become slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ. And let me say no slave ever had a greater master than what we have in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, do you see the word "kingdom"? That's a very important word. "He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom

of His beloved Son." And the moment you are converted, you enter through the narrow gate, and your first step, you are in the kingdom of God.

Now, every kingdom has a what? Has a king. And the moment you entered into the kingdom of God, you entered in under the sovereignty and the supreme rule of the Lord Jesus Christ over your life. And the reason I want to draw this to your attention is that there is some really bad teaching that's going around, and a lot of it here in Dallas, Texas, that you can be saved but not under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's called a non-lordship salvation, and that is rotten teaching that is contrary to the Word of God.

The moment you are converted, you enter into the kingdom of God; and in the kingdom of God, you are under the King. You don't wait five or ten years later to want to now acknowledge the lordship of Christ over your life. No, He became Lord over your life the moment you entered into His kingdom. This is vitally important even to help you understand when it was that you were converted.

I wish I had a nickel for every time someone has come up to me and said, "Can you help me define when it was that I was saved, when I entered the kingdom of God?" And in a sense, only God knows; but in another sense, my stock answer is, "When did you come under the authority of the King? When did you come under the recognized authority of the Lord Jesus Christ in His right to rule your life?" That's when you entered into the kingdom of God.

Now, this kingdom, in verse 13, it says, "the kingdom of His beloved Son." "His" refers to God the Father, obviously in distinction from the beloved Son, and literally translated is "the Son of His love." That Jesus Christ, who has been the predominant theme in these verses to this point, who is mentioned in verses 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 10, and then 15-22, He's the King over His kingdom. "Kingdom" here referring to the sphere of His reign, the jurisdiction of His authority.

Now, to understand "the kingdom of His beloved Son," which is the kingdom of Christ, we need to understand that the Bible refers to the kingdom of Christ in three different ways; and I want to make this distinction. I can still hear R. C. Sproul in my ear, saying, "Lawson, a theologian makes careful distinctions." And so I want to make these careful distinctions with you, because the kingdom of Christ is used in three different ways.

Number one, there is the universal kingdom of Christ. It is His sovereign rule over heaven and earth. It is His sovereign rule over all of the affairs of providence. And in Matthew 28:18, Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and earth have been given unto Me." And as R. C. Sproul would say, "There are no maverick molecules in the universe," that everything carries out the bidding of the King, the Lord Jesus Christ, as He administrates the affairs of providence and causes all things to work together for good. So He is the King over the entire universe, and He is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He is seated at the right hand of God the Father, that place of highest authority in the entire universe; and we're zealous for this truth.

The second aspect of the kingdom of Christ is the millennial kingdom of Christ, in which after Jesus' second coming, Revelation 19, He will rule and reign for a thousand years upon this earth, and He will rule and reign from Jerusalem; and it will be a golden age. It will be a time in which the lion will lay down next to the lamb, and the deserts will spring forth with streams in the desert and blossoms of flowers; and the earth will be restored to what it was in the garden of Eden. And Christ will be here, and He will sit upon a throne, and He will rule and reign for a thousand years after His second coming.

And then there's the third aspect of the kingdom of Christ which is "the Salvation kingdom of Christ"; and this is the rule and reign of Christ in the hearts of all believers. This kingdom is within us. This kingdom Jesus outlined in the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:3-12. Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," present tense verb, not looking ahead to some future golden age after the return of Christ, and not referring to everyone in the world. But for those who have entered through

the narrow gate, the kingdom is within them, because the King lives within them; and He has supremacy and sovereignty over our lives.

So with the universal kingdom, He's seated at the right hand of God the Father; with the millennial kingdom, He is here upon the earth; with the saving kingdom, He is within our heart, and He has the right to rule and to govern our lives. He has the right by virtue of His universal sovereignty, and by virtue of the fact that He bought us at the cross; and we're no longer our own, we now belong to Him. He now presides over the affairs of our lives.

Now before I move on, I want to make some application here. This demands many things from us, what I just stated to you, that you're in the kingdom now, and you have a King; and at the very least, it demands four things from you and from me. And I want to pull over and park just for a moment and stress this with you, that this is what is required of you and me.

And number one is our submission, it's our submission. Because Christ is our King, we are therefore His subjects. We are His servants. We are His slaves, to use biblical language. We are citizens in His kingdom, and we must live our lives in lowliness of mind and humility of heart, bowing before our King, knowing that we are His subjects, and we owe to Christ our King our undying loyalty and our full allegiance, over and above and beyond any earthly commitment that we would have.

This morning, strangely enough, I saw on Instagram – and I can't believe I'm quoting from Instagram at this hour. I'm drawing this from the eternal councils of the Trinity. No, I guess it was Instagram. But anyway, this person said, "You need to end every day" – this is kind of interesting, kind of put a smile on my face – "you need to end every day by taking your slippers" – I don't have slippers – "but take your slippers and put them as far under your bed as you possibly can. And then when you wake up in the morning to retrieve your slippers, you're going to have to get on your knees to reach under the bed to get those slippers." And then he said, "You just need to stay there a while." That's the image, that's the picture of our lives

as citizens in the kingdom. We need to live on our knees in humble submission to the rightful rule of the King of kings and the Lord of lords over our lives.

The second thing that this requires of us is our worship. Our King is so glorious. I mean, that's what drew me to Christ when I was a 17-year-old young boy, as I heard the gospel accounts in John being taught and layered out; my heart was just leaping out of my chest to hear of one so majestic and so powerful, yet so loving and so full of grace, and who could change and transform my life. We must rise up and ascribe to Him the honor and the glory that belongs to our King alone, and not just on Sunday morning, but throughout the week. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. He's worthy of our adoration and our homage. And we must be continually offering an anthem of praise to our King, even in the valleys of trials and tribulations.

The third thing that we owe to our King – if He is our King and if we are His subjects – we owe him our obedience. He is our King, and His law is the rule of our lives. It is the highest rule of our lives; and we must obey Him over and above anything else. Nothing takes precedence over our compliance with His commandments.

And the fourth thing that it requires of us is our sacrifice. He is our King, who has sacrificed everything for us by going to the cross and being lifted up and becoming our sin-bearer, and suffering under the wrath of His own Father. He was crushed by the Father. He shed His blood. He made the only atonement for our sin. He gave up His life for us. He gave up everything for us. And in turn, we must sacrifice for Him. There is no sacrifice too great for us to make that we would render for our all-glorious King.

I think of the life of C. T. Studd who lived in the 19th century. He was the most famous athlete in all of England. He was a cricket player. He was the Michael Jordan of his day. He was the most distinguished athlete in all of England. And he came from a very affluent family. His father was a huge rice farmer and had made an accumulated fortune, and sent his son off to Cambridge, which was a gathering place of the brightest minds; and he

excelled there. And while he was at Cambridge, literally with the world in the palm of his hand, knowing that after he graduated he would go back and take over his father's vast business interests, he came in contact with the gospel of Jesus Christ; and more importantly the gospel came in contact with him, and he was soundly, radically converted. And soon thereafter, he felt the call to the mission field, to walk away from everything that everyone else would kill to go have; he decided he would walk away from his father's vast estate and go to the other side of the world, at a time when there's no airplanes. To get there is an arduous trip. And there were six other men who joined with him, and they became known as the Cambridge Seven. And there at Cambridge, all the students would be just dressed in such traditional coat and tie attire as they would attend class; and the Cambridge Seven decided they would dress up in Chinese garb, signifying that they are ready to go identify themselves with these who have never heard the gospel on the other side of the earth.

So upon graduation, there was no second thought. He did not go to his father's business, he went about his Father's business on the other side of the earth; and there he buried himself in the work of missions. While he was there his father passed away. He got on a steamer, sailed back to England. And everyone knew he was coming back now; this was a thing that he went through in China, he's now ready to assume his father's business. And when he returns, in one day – and he inherited everything – in one day he gave away 90 percent of the vast estate, in one day. He gave a large chunk to the evangelist D. L. Moody who was a part of him coming to faith in Christ, and then got on a steamer and went back to China to bury himself in spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ.

After that mission was complete, he went to South Africa, and there he met the daughter of a famous missionary, Robert Moffat, and fell in love with her and married her; and on their wedding day, as his wedding present for her, he gave her the other 10 percent of his father's estate. And on that same day, she gave that 10 percent away to the work of missions. People thought he had lost his mind. They said, "Why have you done this?" He said, "If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice is too great for me to make for Him." If Christ is our King – and He is, and we are His loyal subjects – and He has sacrificed everything for us by giving His life unto

death at the cross, then no sacrifice is too great that we will ever make for the rest of our lives in commencement with His glory and His grace.

So, God rescued us, and God relocated us. As we come to verse 14 now there are two more aspects of our salvation that I want you to see; and we turn from God the Father to God the Son, and we see, third, Christ redeemed us. And in verse 14 we read, "in whom we have redemption." The "whom" refers back to Jesus Christ. The "whom," the antecedent of whom is in the previous verse, verse 13, we just looked at it, "His beloved Son." It is in Christ that we have redemption. It is in the sphere of Christ, in the merit of Christ, in the work of Christ we have redemption; and outside of Christ there is no redemption, outside of Christ there is no salvation. Acts 4:12, "There's salvation in no other name; for there's no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

He is the only Savior in the world. But in Him, "in whom we have redemption." You'll note "have" is in the present tense, meaning right now we have this. We're not waiting to go to heaven. And once we get into heaven, then all the crown jewels are going to be transferred to our account. No, the crown jewels of heaven have already been transferred into our account; we already have redemption.

And the word "we" also signifies only believers. It's "us" in verse 13, it's "we" in verse 14. It is in us and in us alone. It is only in we who have committed our lives to Christ that we have redemption. Now the word "redemption," what does the word "redemption" mean? Well, the word "redemption" is a compound word, which very simply means just two words merge together to form one word, and there is a main root word and there's a prefix put at the beginning of that word, and I just want to tell you about it. The main root word simply means the payment of a ransom to secure someone who's being held hostage, who's being held captive against his will, and he cannot escape; and someone will come and will pay the ransom to secure the liberation of the one who is being held hostage.

The word is also used of someone going into a slave market where slaves are being sold, and someone will pay the price to purchase a slave, and it will be his possession now; and he will take that slave out of the slave market of sin, and he will say, "You will come home with me, and you will serve me." That's what this word "redemption" means. And what it is to say is that Christ descended from heaven and entered into this world. He lives a sinless life; and He went to the cross, and there He shed His blood, and He redeemed us. He bought us with His own blood. He purchased us to become His own possession, and He has taken us out of the domain of darkness, He has taken us out of the slave market of sin and Satan, He has taken us out of the evil world system, and He has now, through the Father's work, we are transferred into the kingdom of His beloved Son, and it is activated by the redemption that is in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a glorious truth.

Hypothetically, it is hypothetically possible that we could be forgiven our sins and just left in the domain of darkness and be the cruel possession of this evil world to be the cruel possession of the devil, and be forgiven, and live the most battered life throughout our lifetime, and then one day inner heaven and finally be freed from this domain of darkness. But no, through the death of Christ we have been redeemed, we have been bought, the ransom has been paid, and we have been ushered out; "and if the Son shall set you free, you shall be free indeed"; and we now are citizens in His heavenly kingdom. And all of this has already taken place. Whether you're up to speed on what all has taken place or not, it has taken place. And this is all recorded in the indicative mood, which means it's just a statement of fact; there are no conditions to be met yet. We would say today in the vernacular, "It's a done deal."

This has happened in your life. You no longer are a part of the evil world system. You've been redeemed. You've been bought. You're no longer a slave of sin. But you know what? You're still a slave. You're a slave of Jesus Christ, and you now live under His authority in His house, to carry out His work at His pleasure; and it's all good. Romans 3:24, "being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." First Corinthians 1:30, "By His doing" - referring to the Father's doing - "you are in Christ Jesus." How did you come to be in Christ positionally? It was the Father that placed you into Christ. "By His doing

you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption."

Now, let me make sure that we understand this. The Redeemer is Jesus Christ. The ransom payment is His shed blood. The payee, the one who is paid, is God the Father. And for many centuries in the past there was a heretical position known as the ransom to Satan theory, that because we were held captive by the devil in his slave market of sin, that Christ paid the ransom price to the devil. Listen, we owe the devil nothing; it was paid to the One whose laws were violated, whose holiness was violated, the One who said, "The wages of sin is death." It was paid to God the Father. At the cross the transaction was not between Christ and the devil; Christ crushed the devil at the cross. The transaction was between the Son and the Father, as the Son offers up His life to the Father; and His shed blood paid the ransom for our sins to the Father. The redeemed are all believers, and the liberation is from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of light. This is your life. This is your conversion. This is your testimony. This is what happened.

Now, fourth and finally, at the end of verse 14, there's a fourth benefit of the cross, if you will, and of our salvation. Not only has God rescued us and relocated us, and not only has the Son redeemed us, but fourth now, Christ released us.

At the end of verse 14 are four powerful words: "the forgiveness of sins." This too is at the very heart of the gospel. The word "forgiveness" means the release, the dismissal, the sending away. And "sins" here refer to our entire lifetime of sin. It's all of our sins. You'll notice "sins" is in the plural, and it's a cumulative: all of our sins, who believe in Christ; all of our sins past, present, and future.

And someone may say, "Well, how can He forgive my future sins?" I would just remind you, when He died 2,000 years ago all of your sins were future. He has taken away and forgiven all your past sins, all your present sins, all of your future sins, and this includes sins of commission, that which you do

and should not have done; sins of omission, that which you did not do, but should have done; sins of attitudes of the heart, you had the wrong motive; and sins of actions, you've made the wrong choice to go the wrong way to do the wrong thing.

The whole mountain range of sin in your life was laid upon the Lord Jesus Christ; and in those last three hours as He hung upon the cross from 12 noon until three o'clock, He interceded for you, and He became the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He became our scapegoat. He became our sacrificial Lamb. And as our sins were laid upon Him, as it was foreshadowed on the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16 when the priest would lay hands on a scapegoat; and it signified the transfer of sin to the scapegoat. Though it was only symbolic - there's only one Lamb who takes away the sin of the world - he would be released and go out into the wilderness, never to be seen again.

And it was a dress rehearsal for Calvary. It was a picture of what would take place those many years later when Christ would be lifted up upon the cross. He would become the ultimate sacrifice for our sins. "God the Father made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us." He bore our sins in His body upon the cross, and He took them far away into the wilderness of God's forgetfulness, never to remember our sins anymore.

I can remember mine, some of them. God cannot; judicially He cannot. He's omnipresent, He still knows everything; but in a judicial sense, He cannot remember our sins anymore. It's been said that the devil is a gravedigger who loves to dig up our past sins and bring them back before our mind to remember what God has already forgotten. "Their lawless deeds and iniquities I will remember no more."

I don't know that there's anything more glorious that you could hear today than this. Others can preach the gospel better than me, but no one can preach a better gospel than me. This is the best. That's why "gospel" means good news; and it's good news, because I know something about you, and you know something about me, that every one of us in this room have a

massive sin problem. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of . And the wages of sin is death, and God is of pure eyes than to behold iniquity. But the good news is that long before we ever sinned, God already had a plan, and the plan was the gospel, the means by which God would send His Son, His only begotten Son, into this world to die in our place upon the cross, and there clear the way for us to come before the throne of grace and to find full acceptance with the Father.

These are glorious truths, beloved, and they lie at the very heart of the gospel. You have just heard Paul lay out for us today the heart of the gospel. If you're a believer in Christ today, these truths demand something very great of you. You cannot just get up and walk out. These truths grab you by the lapel of your coat, or of your dress, and pull you up, and they demand your worship, they demand your allegiance, they demand your loyalty, they demand your humility, they demand your sacrifice, they demand even your willingness to suffer for the name of Christ. If Jesus Christ be God and laid down His life for me, then no sacrifice is too great for me to make for Him.

And if you're an unbeliever here today, if you've never come to the point of commitment to Jesus Christ, these verses are calling out to you to take that decisive step of faith, to leave the domain of darkness, to enter through the narrow gate and to enter into the kingdom of God. And no one else can make this decision for you; this lies with you and with you alone. And you have postponed this, and you have put this off, and you have made excuses to yourself, and you have wanted to continue to go down the same path; and maybe you have even rationalized in your mind, "One day, one day, one day."

My friend, one day may never come. But I can tell you this: today is today, and today could well be the greatest day of your life to commit your life to Jesus Christ. If I had ten thousand lives, I'd give every one of them to Jesus Christ. You have only one. Will you hoard it for yourself and for this world, or will you put your life into the hands of Jesus Christ by faith?

So I urge you, I call upon you this very moment in the depth of your heart of heart to say, "I will become a follower of Jesus Christ today." If that is the intention of your heart, then I plead with you to make that decision now. And I have never heard anyone who has committed their life to Christ say, "You know, I really wish I hadn't done that," and I never will. The only thing I'll ever hear is, "I wish I had committed my life to Christ sooner, earlier. Why did I wait so long? Why did I drag my feet?"

"Boast not yourself of tomorrow, for you know not what a day may bring forth. Behold, him who knows right and does it not, to him it is sin. Behold, now is the accepted time. Behold, today is the day of salvation." May it be so today in your life. Let us pray.

[Prayer] Father in heaven, we rise up and we bless and praise Your holy name, that You are the great God of heaven and earth; and all praise and glory goes to You for our salvation. And we praise our Savior Jesus Christ who is King of kings and Lord of lords. We give You, ascribe to You all glory and praise, in Jesus' name. Amen. [End]

Hear the closing benediction: "O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To God be the glory forever. Amen." God bless you, you are dismissed.