

Sunday, January 1, 2017

Pastor Keith Sovo

Introduction to Colossians 2:13-15

There are few things more precious in Christianity than the cross. The cross simultaneously makes uncomfortable and brings the sweetest comfort. It reminds us that we are wicked beyond any self-willed repair. It tells us that we have done evil things that hurt others and prevent us from knowing God in any real way. It tells us that we are unable to save ourselves from God's righteous wrath and that our destiny was to be separated from Him forever.

The cross also tells us of the love of God. It tells us that, despite our wickedness, God made the conscious decision to send Jesus to die in our place. It tells us that God cares for us far beyond what we could ever imagine. It tells us that all of our sins have been paid for. We don't need to continue to do good deeds in order to earn God's favor and kindness.

Finally, it tells us that we no longer live under the power of sin. We are free to do good deeds and live the way God intended because we are no longer bound to do the same old things over and over. This is indeed good news. This is the gospel!

Context

These verses come at the end of a section that describes our union with Christ. For those who have repented of their sins and trusted in Christ, they can enjoy the benefits of His death and resurrection on their behalf—dying to the old way of life, and living a new life in right relationship to God!

Structure

- I. Former Death, Present/Future Life (13)
- II. Figurative Legal/Financial Debt Expunged (14)
- III. Shaming of the Demonic Powers and Authorities (15)

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read Colossians 2:13-15

“The Victory of the Cross”

Questions: What did God accomplish through the death of Christ?

Why is it worth proclaiming?

I. He Gave Us Life (13)

II. He Canceled Our Debts (14)

III. He Made a Mockery of Satan and His Minions (15)

Discuss

1. Death has been on a lot of people's minds this year with the many celebrities who have died. When you think about death, what comes to mind?
2. If life is, by definition, rightly relating-to (that is, knowing, loving, enjoying, worshiping) God, do you feel like you're living life to the full?
3. How is it possible for a perfect God, who is holy and righteous and just, who knows every sin you've actively or passively committed, to be reconciled to us?
4. Read Romans 8:35, 38-39. Colossians 2 says that Satan and his minions have been defeated through Christ's death on the cross, but they are still trying to attack Christians. How does Romans 8 help us understand the victory of the cross in light of our experience of suffering and trials?
5. How does the cross impact the way you view yourself? How does it change not only your identity, but also your self-image? How does it change the way you view other people?

Go Deeper *(This section is especially for leaders to consider as they prepare for the Growth Group meeting)*

Gospel Connections: The heart of the gospel is that God has reconciled people to Himself through the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross and His subsequent resurrection. In order to fully appreciate this, we must recognize the dilemma we were in before. As unreconciled sinners, we lived under the righteous wrath of God. We had failed to keep His laws and because of that we were damned to eternity apart from God. But God, because Christ took that wrath on Himself, is able to forgive us our sins and make peace with us.

Whole Bible Connections: The connection of the “written code” to Jewish understanding of the law is crucial to understanding this passage. The Jews understood that God had a moral code and that they would be held accountable to its promised curses if they broke it (cf. Deut. 27:9-26). So all throughout the Old Testament, especially in the prophetic books, Israel is held to account according to the laws of God which they agreed to back in Deuteronomy. The same is true for Gentiles (Rom. 2:14-16). But even though we broke the laws we agreed to, God is still merciful towards us. He does not give us according to we deserve.

Theological Connections: God is both righteous and merciful. This is how He identified Himself to Moses in Exodus 34:6-7 and He has not changed (Heb. 13:8). Therefore, God could not forsake one aspect of His character in order to appease another. Whatever would happen in salvation would be consistent with the entirety of God’s holy character. So, in sending Jesus, God was able to fulfill the pouring out of His wrath on mankind, while still being able to save some because Jesus would suffer God’s wrath on their behalf. It is important as we read the Bible not to underemphasize any aspect of God’s character. It is impossible to overemphasize His glorious attributes, but we most certainly can underemphasize them. So if we speak about His love, we must also speak about His wrath. If we speak about His grace, we must also speak about His justice. In that way, He is glorified for who He truly is.