Good Friday: Triumph Through the Cross

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Preacher: Todd Born

[0:00] Good evening, guys. Can you hear me? Great. Tonight we're going to be in Colossians chapter 2.! So if you want to open up, if you have a Bible, if you have it on your paper there, I think most of us have it on our papers, but we're going to be in the book of Colossians chapter 2.

And I'm only going to be reading through, I know in the paper it's printed off 13, but I'm only going to be reading from, all right, it's at 12, it starts. I'm only going to be reading at 13 through 15. That's where my text is going to be tonight. So let us stay standing. Thank you for doing that.
For the reading of God's word from Colossians chapter 2, verses 13 through 15. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.
This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in him.
May God add a blessing to his word. I'm going to open up with a word of prayer and you guys can go ahead and sit down now, please.
[1:35] Father, we thank you for gathering us here tonight.

Father, to just celebrate and to glean and to look at the magnificent work of your son, Jesus, on the cross. So Father, keep us here tonight in the shadow of the cross.
Let us learn. Let us know. Help us to treasure and to Savior what he has done and live in the good of that.
Lord, open our eyes and our hearts tonight, we pray. Amen. Amen. In the year 168 BC, Aemilius Paulus defeated Perseus, the last king of Macedonia, in the third and final Macedonian War. Aemilius was granted a Roman triumph, a celebration lasting three days. It was actually one of the most spectacular and lavish Roman triumphs in Roman history.
[2:52] On this three-day celebration, on each day, they paraded around with their riches gained from the war. Spectators lining the streets, cheering with shouts of joy over the open showcase of the Macedonian weapons and symbols of the defeated king.

And the climax of this event was Perseus, the king of Macedon, was stripped of its kingly attire and held captive, showcased for all to see, while Aemilius rode in a magnificent chariot, wearing a purple and gold robe and a laurel crown, celebrating his victory.
One of the difficult parts about being a pastor with a text is we're called to embody the text. We're called to keep the mood, if you might say, of the text.
So I know tonight is a memorial and a somber kind of quiet moment we have of reflection of the cross. But my text is also, it leans more on the joyous side.
I mean, the title is The Triumphant Christ. So triumph is a celebration of victory. So tonight in my text, yes, we will venture through and see the tragedy of the cross, but we'll also celebrate in the glory of the cross and the triumph of the cross.
[4:18] Last week, Andrew so graciously took us through Colossians chapter 1 and unpacked that amazing text to see the supremacy of Christ and redemption in all of creation.

Paul, in this letter to Colossians, does not disappoint. He wants to make sure that the church clearly understands the work, the person and the work of Christ Jesus.
So tonight we gather to remember this most divine, most awful, most holy moment in the history of the universe. It is the apex of God's mission to save his people.
And these few verses about the cross of Christ here in Colossians is seen as central pieces to his whole letter. So it's amazing that even I have the privilege to declare this message to you tonight.

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It really, it baffles me because I stand like you at the foot of the cross and I see my own unworthiness. And yet I see how loved I am.
[5:27] I see how loved we are. By God. So that's my hope and my prayer for all of us here tonight. That we will all see, know, and worship in all of how on the cross, Christ the King was triumphant over sin, death, and Satan.

So that we can be forgiven, made alive, and be triumphant with him. Again, on the cross, Christ the King was triumphant over death, sin, and Satan.
So that we can be forgiven, made alive, and be triumphant with him. That leads me into my first point this morning.
I'm going to have three points tonight. Not this morning, tonight. And the first point is going to be at the cross, we bring nothing. The second point is at the cross, we are forgiven.
And the third point is at the cross, we are triumphant. So in my first point tonight is at the cross, we bring nothing.
[6:32] So let's look at verse 13 here in chapter 2 of Colossians. And you who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh. And you who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh.

Paul here is escalating his case. He's already been making throughout this entire letter in order to show the depths of the Colossian believer's previous state.
So only so that they can more clearly see how significant and marvelous the work of Christ has achieved for them on the cross. The verse might sound familiar.
It echoes back to chapter 1 and verse 21. He says, So Paul is building his case.
He builds it here saying, Not only were you alienated, hostile, and doing evil deeds, you were also dead. You were spiritually dead.
[7:41] Dead is as far gone as we can get. And if you must know the Greek for this word dead, if you're questioning it at all, it means dead. It means a corpse, a lifeless body.

Humanity is as dead to any spiritual truth as a human corpse is to feeling anything. So essentially, Paul wants them to grasp is that in our previous spiritual state, it is impossible, impossible to do anything to see and understand the glory of Christ.
So not only are we spiritually dead, but there is also a legal nature to our sin. Looking at verse 14, he says, We had a record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.
Just like someone who has incurred an insurmountable amount of debt that could never be paid back. They're bound to declare their debts. You cannot hide it.
You cannot hide from it. You cannot wish it away. There would be no hope of you ever being able to discharge them. But this was no mere earthly debt, but it's a spiritual debt of treason, of rebellion on a cosmic scale.
[9:04] So Paul here, when he says that it's your dead and your trespasses and your uncircumcision, he's saying it doesn't matter if you're a Jew or a Gentile.

All of humanity is spiritually dead. And all are legally condemned by the insurmountable records of sin that stood against us. In our own strength, in our own effort, it is impossible to see or know the glory of Christ.
All we deserve, though, was his righteous wrath. But this impossible task, this seemingly impossible task, was made possible by the very one we owed.
And he acted on our behalf. Which leads us to our second point tonight. At the cross, we are forgiven. We'll be going through verses 13 and 14 here together.
Back and forth. I want to show you that Paul explains that God is the one who acted. He is the sole actor in this part. He provided a way for us just as he promised he would centuries before when he spoke by way of the prophet Isaiah.
[10:13] In Isaiah chapter 43, verse 25, God says, I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for my own sake.

And I will not remember your sins. God is the sole actor in our salvation. For God so loved the world that he sent his one and only son into this world with one mission.
Christ knew this was the only way. He knew this was the only way. God took our insurmountable record of debt, placed it into his son's hands, and he nailed it to the cross with Christ.
So Christ became our substitute, standing in our place for the payment of our debt. As the hymn goes, it was my sin that held him there until it was accomplished.

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And until what was accomplished? The fullness of God's just wrath being poured out onto Christ in his punishment for our sin.
[11:30] As Paul explicitly here and definitively lays out for us in verse 14, thus canceling our record of debt. It is done.

He has canceled our debt. Other translations put it, he has erased the record of debt. He has plotted out the record of debt. He has destroyed our record of debt.
Oh, what good news this is. But Paul continues here. Paul continues to compound this truth in verse 14 by adding this record of debt he has set aside.
When one goes into the courtroom, the bailiff is sitting there and has a stack of files, a record of cases ready to go for the judge, ready for the day session.
And in the courtroom of heaven, you're standing before God, but your file, with all of its lists of sins you have done, it's gone. Nowhere to be found.
[12:33] Paul wants to make it clear to the Christian who sees that it was their sin that held him there. Christ says to them, I am wiping your slate clean, giving you a new start.

He took that signed acknowledgement of indebtedness, which stood as a perpetual witness against us and canceled it by his death.
The record is completely obliterated in God's reckoning. Just as the psalmist makes clear in Psalm 103, verse 12, as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.
This is good news because guess what? The east and the west never meet. They never meet. So when God forgives, he keeps no record.
It is vanquished. It is gone. And so Paul explicitly states in verse 13, God has forgiven us all our sins, all our trespasses.
[13:44] Christ's work on the cross had the effect of reconciling us relationally with God. As John Piper so wonderfully says, God applies to us personally what Christ accomplished perfectly.

Let me say it again. God applies to us personally what Christ accomplished perfectly. In that courtroom standing before God with your file missing, Christ says, I took it.
I took it. I got this. It is through the death of Christ that we are united with Christ by faith.
And it is through this union that his death becomes our very own death. His righteousness becomes our righteousness. But it doesn't stop there, no.
It does not stop there. Remember that you were spiritually dead apart from the cross of Christ. And so in verse 13, Paul says that we are no longer dead, but God has made us alive together with Christ.
[14:55] Because we have been forgiven at the cross. God makes us spiritually and eternally alive with Christ. You are no longer a corpse unable to respond spiritually.

But now we are able to see Christ in all of his glory. Our hearts are now moved to follow him, to treasure him, to love him, and to trust Christ above all else.
This glorious work of Christ on the cross has not only forgiven us and made us alive, but it did something incredible to the rulers and authorities. As we look and see in verse 15, brings us to our last point, at the cross we are triumphant.
Verse 15 says, He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in him. These rulers and authorities in Ephesians chapter 6, Paul says that these rulers and authorities include Satan and cosmic powers in the heavenly places.
So Christ has disarmed them. He has disarmed Satan. Or another word for disarmed here is stripped. Christ has stripped them of any authority that these powers have had.
[16:28] The rulers and authorities at play, flogging Christ, crowning him with a crown of thorns, leading him in a triumphal procession on the road to Calvary, making him carry his own cross, stripping him of his clothes, nailing him and lifting him high upon the cross in open shame, shouting, Save yourself if you're the Son of God.

Bring yourself down. They thought the victory was theirs. These powers, these rulers thought the victory was theirs.
They thought the victory was theirs. Stripping Christ of all his glory. But rather, there's been a twist in this paradoxical drama. Christ was right there where he wanted to be.
Christ looks over. He says, Gotcha. This is my plan all along. I have you and then me right where I want to be. That what was really happening with Satan and his demonic forces were being stripped.

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They were rendered powerless. They were made captives. They were being led in triumphal procession by Christ on his cross.
[17:59] F.S. Bruce so powerfully says it in this way, that the shameful tree has become the victor's triumphal chariot, before which his captives are driven in humiliating procession.

The involuntary and impotent confessors of a superior might. Oh, this is good news. The very instrument of disgrace and death was turned by God into the very instrument of their defeat and disablement.
With his outstretched, pierced, and bloody hands, Christ displayed to the universe their helplessness in his own vanquished strength.
This, my friends, is the awesome and dramatic scene we remember and we celebrate tonight. This is the power of the cross.
This is the power of Christ's death on the cross. So you might ask, why does Paul make this a climactic point in his letter to the Colossians?
[19:11] What does this do for the Christian? Not only did Christ's work on the cross free us from the guilt of sin, but it removed its hold over us.

As Charles Wesley says in a hymn, he breaks the power of canceled sin. He sets the prisoner free. His blood can make the phallus clean. His blood availed from me.
He breaks the power of canceled sin. There are a multitude of ways that this triumphant act on the cross has affected Christians, setting us free.
But tonight, I'm only going to be able to highlight two of those. First, we are no longer condemned. We are innocent in Christ. And secondly, we have no more fear of death.
Death has lost its sting. We are eternally made alive with Christ. In Revelation chapter 12, Satan is called the accuser, the accuser of God's people.
[20:21] The one damning weapon that Satan has is to accuse, to accuse us of unforgiven sin. But even this most damning weapon has been disarmed, has been vanquished on the cross, left powerless.

Like a snake without its fangs, the accuser has been left defanged and rendered powerless. He comes to accuse, to lead us away.
We still get enamored with his accusations to this day, but they are powerless before us. He speaks lies about us, seeking to destroy our faith.
Look at you. You think you're good enough? I see your sin. You'll never be free from this sin. God doesn't really love you that much.
You don't fit in here with these people. These whisperings, these murmurings that Satan sticks his schemes into. It reminds me, though, of Zachariah's vision of Joshua, the high priest, standing before the Lord and Satan by Joshua's side.
[21:42] Joshua was being accused by Satan, but the Lord rebuked him and took Joshua's filthy garment, saying, I have taken your iniquity away from you.

And gave him a pure, righteous robe and new turban. This is the power of the cross. Secondly, we no longer need to fear death.
Satan can no longer hold the penalty of sin, death, over us. In Hebrews 2, verse 14, I believe this is very helpful for us in seeing this.
It says, since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, that is, we are human, he himself likewise partook of the same thing. He became human.
That through death, he might destroy, nullify, revoke, abolish, the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil. You see, the Christ's death on the cross took the sting out of death.
[22:47] The very next verse in that chapter of Hebrews says, Satan held us in bondage through fear of death all lifelong. But it's no longer, no longer.

The accuser can no longer hold us captive to this fear of death. He has been disarmed, stripped of his powers. For now we are united with Christ in his death.
He died the death that we deserved, satisfying and paying the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.
So Christian, what do we do when we forget, when we're faced with the accusations of the enemy, when we struggle spiritually, when we hear these lies raging against us, I want to encourage you to simply stand firm.

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Stand firm in the faith. Fix your gaze upon the risen Christ with his pierced body. We stand firm in this truth.
[24:02] This is what holds us fast. It's the gospel that Christ, and Christ alone triumphed over sin on the cross.

I grew up seeing Good Friday this day as a time to often just feel bad. To feel bad for Jesus, to feel bad about myself, to feel bad about Jesus and his suffering, like I was crucifying Jesus all over again.
Going through these motions, and even now that lingers. Even now it's tempting to approach this time tonight with just mere sadness over Christ's suffering, which I think is appropriate on some level, but may we never lose sight in our grieving of the triumph that Jesus achieved on the cross on this day, which was then confirmed by God when he rose from the dead on the third day.
Greg Morris says this so wonderfully, so helpfully. We should weep indeed at the foot of the cross, but not with pity, with faith.
Those tears of faith don't dry up on Monday after Easter. Those tears mourn over the sin that nailed him there. Those tears sing over him as our conquering king.
[25:35] Those tears celebrate his death until his return. Christian, here we remain immovable.

And this is how we advance. We advance by what Christ has done. It's not but what I can do, but treasuring up our union with Christ's death on the cross.
We need nothing else. We can add nothing else. We need no one else. We have nothing to bring, to offer, but it is the triumphant Christ in Christ alone who has done it on our behalf.
So let us celebrate. Let us grieve at our sin, but let us celebrate in the goodness of who Jesus is and what he has done.
Let us pray. Father, thank you. Thank you for your word. Thank you for your gospel.
[26:46] Thank you for the cross that has saved us, that has forgiven us, that has brought us back to life, and that has made us right before you, paying for our debt.

Thank you, Lord. We pray. Amen. Amen. voy voy voy voy voy voy voy voy voy voy voy voy voy voy voy voy voy voy voy voy voy voy voy voy voy voy voy voy voy voy

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