

Colossians 2:11-15
“A Heart Freed by Christ”
Sermon
Tim Black

1.

Introduction

1.

Issue

1.

Illustration

1.

Red-tailed hawk & rehabilitation program. For a time during high school I wanted to become a wildlife biologist, and study God’s amazing creatures in the wild. Because of this interest I had the privilege of accompanying a woman who rehabilitated injured wild animals on the day when she released a red-tailed hawk back into the wild. The hawk had been found with a broken wing, she had rehabilitated it, and now it was ready to be released. We drove to the top of a hill behind the town where I grew up, set the hawk’s cage among the wheat stubble some distance from the road, opened the door of the cage, and stepped back to watch it go free. The hawk stayed inside the cage for a minute, then stepped to the door of the cage, and realizing that the door was open and it was free to leave, the hawk spread its wings and flew to freedom. Now it was free again to live the way God made it to live. It was not made to live in a cage. It was made to fly.

2.

Explanation

1.

In salvation, God frees you from captivity to sin, and frees you to live the way He made you to live. A heart held captive to sin is like the hawk in the cage – it is held captive by an internal principle of sin like the hawk's broken wing, by the legal guilt of sin like the laws that permitted the hawk to be kept in captivity, and the spiritual power of sin like the cage that held the hawk captive.

2.

The hawk was injured, and just like the hawk was injured, legally held captive, and kept in a cage, so you are held captive by the internal principle of sin, by the guilt of sin, and by the power of sin.

3.

Context

1.

Col. 2:8-10

1.

Do not be taken captive by a worldview that is according to the world

-

Its method of capture: "philosophy and empty deception"

Col. 2:11-15 - A Heart Freed By Christ

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Its source of knowledge: “traditions of men”

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Its ultimate basis: “basic principles of the world”

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But rather, have a worldview that is according to Christ

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Its ultimate basis: “in Him the fullness of deity dwells bodily”

-

Its source of knowledge: “you have been filled in Him”

-

Its method of freeing you: “who is the head of all rule and authority”

-

Col. 2:11-23 says that you now have...

1.

A Heart Freed by Christ 11-15

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2.

A Mind Freed by Christ 16-19

3.

A Life Freed by Christ 20-23

4.

So Col. 3:1-4 tells you to...

1.

Seek Christ with your heart 1

2.

Seek Christ with your mind 2

3.

Seek Christ with your life 3-4

4.

Summary of main points: A heart freed by Christ is a heart freed from the principle,
the guilt, and the power

of sin.

1.

Body: A Heart Freed by Christ...

1.

Is a heart freed from the principle of sin 11-12

1.

Through Circumcision 11

1.

Colossians 2:11 “In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ”

2.

This circumcision is “Not made by hands”

-

It is a *spiritual*, rather than *physical*, circumcision.

-

This *spiritual* change is what the sign signified.

-

At its institution: Gen. 17 – 2 sides of covenant: God's commitment & man's required response by faith

-

In Deuteronomy & Jeremiah it is called "heart circumcision"

-

* **Deuteronomy 10:16** **16 Circumcise** therefore the
foreskin of your **heart,**
and be no longer
stubborn.

-

Deuteronomy 30:6 **And the LORD your God will**
circumcise
your
heart
and the heart of your offspring, so that you will
love
the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your
soul, that you may live.

-

Jeremiah 9:25-26 25 "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will punish all those who are **circumcised merely in the flesh** - 26 Egypt, Judah, Edom, the sons of Ammon, Moab, and all who dwell in the desert who cut the corners of their hair, for all **these nations** are **uncircumcised**, and all the house of **Israel** is **uncircumcised** in **heart**.
"

-

* And so Paul says in **Romans 2:28-29** "28 For no one is a Jew who is merely one **outwardly**

, nor is
circumcision

outward
and
physical

. 29 But a Jew is one
inwardly

, and
circumcision is a matter of the heart
, by the Spirit, not by the letter.”

-

**This circumcision is more literally “the
putting off of the body of flesh”**

-

This is a *decisive break with sin* by means of a new heart

-

Formerly, your whole inner man, from your innermost heart of hearts to the outermost tips of your toes, was sinful, was evil.

-

Now, your heart has been changed. Your core. Sin remains in you, but it's not the core of who you are anymore. And so Paul says it remains in your flesh. We call this remaining sin "indwelling sin" because of the way Paul speaks of it in Romans 7:

-

Romans 7:20-23

"20 Now if I do what

I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but
sin that dwells within me

. 21 So I find it to be a law that when I
want to do right, evil lies close at hand. 22

For I delight in the law of God, in my inner
being, 23 but I see in my members
another law

waging war against the law of my mind and
making me captive to the

law of sin

that dwells in my members.”

-

You see, you were not merely a
red-tailed hawk with a broken wing in need
of rehabilitation. Your condition was far
worse. You were *completely*
broken in your

whole

inner man, and you needed

complete

inner rehabilitation. Your heart was not
just sick and in need of healing, not even
just terminally ill, but it was

dead

, and in need of a complete heart

transplant

. There was a “law of sin” in you, a “

principle

of sin.” God put a wedge between your
heart of hearts and this principle of sin
within you when he gave you a new heart.

-

I’ve heard that often women who
have been raped or who have committed a
sexual sin will afterward go into the

shower to try to wash away the evil, the sin, the dirtiness, of what they had just experienced. They wash, and wash, and wash, even for *hours*, but the stain doesn't come off. Because it's on the *inside*.

The stain is not on the outside of their body, but the inside. Paul felt just this way about his sin in Romans 7:

-

Romans 7:24-25 “24 Wretched
man that I am! Who will deliver me
from this body of death?”

-

**This is a circumcision performed
“By Christ”**

-

I won't leave you without Paul's
answer in the following verse: **“25
Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ
our Lord!”**

Paul says the same thing here in
Colossians. We are delivered from
our body of death, from sin that dwells in

US,

“by the circumcision of Christ.”

That is to say,

this is a circumcision performed by Christ.

He

gives us a new heart that is not sinful in itself, and thereby drives a wedge between the core of our person and the sin that remains in us.

He

can cut out your old, evil heart, and give you a new, good heart.

He alone

can wash you on the inside, and make you clean. You tell me, “I need a clean break with the sin inside of me; I need to be clean on the inside.”

Then you need the
circumcision

of Christ, and you need the
baptism
of Christ.

-

Through Baptism 12

1.

Colossians 2:12 “having been

buried

with him in baptism, in which you
were also

raised

with him through faith in the
powerful working of God, who raised
him from the dead.”

2.

Buried with Him

-

God does not just take out your
old, evil heart. He takes it out to

kill it. And then He **buries** it. In fact, if you have received a new heart, then this verse tells you that amazingly, God put your old heart to death in Christ's death, and buried it in Christ's burial. You were buried with Him.

-

This is symbolized in **baptism**. Just as the water in baptism washes away dirt on the outside of your body, so God washed away the wretched dirtiness of your old heart when He put it to death on

the cross and buried it in Christ's grave.

-

This means your old heart is **completely gone**
! It was buried with Christ.

-

Raised to life with Him

-

After getting rid of your old heart, God brought your new heart to life within you by giving you faith in His power by which He raised Christ from the dead.

-

Through faith

-

Baptism is not made effectual in the person baptized

except through faith

-

The new life we experience
is received by faith

-

Faith's passive side –
completely trusting, resting in, and
depending on Christ

-

Faith's active side – it is
the new functioning of the new
heart.

-

**In the working of God who
raised Him from the dead**

-

Is a heart freed from the guilt of sin 13b-14

1.

Thereby God has freed you from the principle of sin. A heart freed by Christ is also **a heart freed from the guilt of sin.**

We see this in vv. 13b-14:

1.

Colossians 2:13-14 “having forgiven us all our trespasses, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.”

2.

“Trespasses”

1.

Have you seen a sign that says “No Trespassing” before? My parents’ house has a very long driveway that looks like a road, and so to keep people from driving down it they put up a sign that says “no trespassing.”

Now we’re a friendly enough family that it’s ok for strangers to drive down our driveway, but the fact that my parents posted

that sign does give them the right to tell someone that they don't belong on our property. That they have "trespassed" into territory they don't have a right to be in.

2.

Every time we sin, we "trespass" over the line of God's law. We go where we shouldn't go. We do what He has told us not to do. And so God has the full right to charge us with

our crimes and punish us for them.

3.

“Record of debt with its legal demands”

1.

And in fact, He has charged us with these crimes. There was a “record of debt” which

demanded that we pay for the ways we have trespassed over the line of God's law. That record stood against us, and we had no escape from its demands.

2.

Have you ever been pulled over by a policeman, and given a ticket? The policeman writes out the ticket as a record of your debt, and that ticket contains legal demands! Specifically, the ticket says that you have to

pay the fine listed on the ticket, or appear in court, or you will be arrested. That is a record of debt with legal demands.

3.

Do you know that the ticket God has written out for your sins says not only that you deserve to pay a fine, or go to court, or be arrested, but it says that you deserve to die? It does. “ The wages of sin is death.”

4.

If this was the end of the story, my friend, even though you might remain free to roam in this world until the day of your death, you would not truly be free. You have that debt to pay hanging over you. The debt you will pay when you die. And so Hebrews tells us that unbelievers live their lives enslaved to the fear of death.

5.

“Set aside”

1.

But God did not make you
to be enslaved to the guilt of
sin. He did not make you to
be a red-tailed hawk
condemned to sit in the

rehabilitation center and never fly! He made you to experience the wonderful freedom of being righteous in His eyes, and holy in your walk before Him. And so Paul tells us here that God forgave our trespasses, He canceled the record of debt with its legal demands, and He set it aside, by nailing it to the cross. The way God did this was by sending Christ to die in your place on the cross. Christ fully paid the penalty you

deserve. And because He received all the pain, and suffering, wrath, and torment—even the *death*—which you deserve, the charges against you have been dropped, the ticket has a big stamp on top of it that says “canceled” and it doesn’t stand between you and God anymore, and you don’t have to fear that future fine, or day in court, or arrest, or death penalty, ever again.

2.

Hebrews tells us that
Christ took on our flesh, and
our guilt, so that

-

Hebrews 2:14-15 “throu
gh death he might destroy the
one who has the power of
death, that is, the devil, 15 and
deliver all those who through
fear of death were subject to
lifelong slavery.

”

1.

You are no longer in slavery to the guilt of sin. You've been set free. You're free to go. To fly like you were made to fly. You're not just free to *go*, but also to *come* to God without any guilt or shame, to delight in His presence, and to rejoice in all the blessings He gives you in life. Your heart is set free

from the guilt of sin.

2.

Applications

1.

Do you sometimes
worry that God won't forgive
you for a particular sin you've

committed? You need to know that if you confess that sin to God and ask Him to forgive you, He *will* forgive you.

2.

Do you sometimes worry that if people found out about the evil things you've done, they would detest you; they would utterly reject you?

Even if no one discovers your sins until they hear about them on the judgment day, do you worry that your guilty record will be an ugly black stain on the perfection of your joy in glory? You need to know that your ticket has been canceled. It does not apply to you anymore. It's not on your record. And you know that because Christ died on the cross. He took the blame. He took the

shame. He took the
punishment. He became that
ugly black stain of sin,
because the Father willed
Him to do it on our behalf.

-

2 Corinthians 5:21 “F
or our sake he made him to
be sin who knew no sin, so
that in him we might become
the righteousness of God.”

-

Do you sometimes feel that even though you're forgiven, even though the record of your debt has been canceled, there's still a *barrier* between you and God because you have sinned against Him? There's no fellowship, no

delight, no freedom to come into God's presence and know He's listening to you? And know He loves you? Then you need to know that God has set aside the barrier that stood between you and Him. It's gone. You really are free to come into His presence. The charges, the ticket, the punishment, is gone. God wants you near Him and He

wants to delight in you. If He were a grandfather He would want you on His knee, so He could tell you His stories and you could ask Him your questions. He loves you! The barrier between you is gone.

-

That's what it means to have a heart set free from

the guilt of sin.

-

**Is a heart freed from
the power of sin 13a, 15**

1.

A heart freed by Christ
is not only freed from the
principle
and the
guilt
of sin, but
**it is also a heart freed
from the
power
of sin.**

Paul says this in vv. 13A
and 15:

1.

Colossians 2:13 “An
d you, who were dead in
your trespasses and the
uncircumcision of your flesh,
God made alive together
with him,”

2.

Colossians 2:15 “H

e disarmed the rulers and
authorities and put them
to open shame, by
triumphing over them in
him.”

3.

Dead...made alive 13a

1.

Before God saved us by setting our heart free from the uncircumcision of our flesh, and setting us free from continually trespassing over the line of His law, Paul says we were “dead.” This means here that we

were *unable to change*
our evil condition. We
were unable to change
the evil in our hearts
which he calls “the
uncircumcision of our
flesh,” and we were
unable to change the
evil in our actions which
he terms our
“trespasses.” Just like
a dead man can’t make

his own heart pump or get up and walk, we were “dead” in that we couldn’t stop our hearts or actions from being evil.

2.

But when God gave us a new heart He gave

us a new life. He made
us alive on the inside.
And this new life on the
inside is itself a new *p*
ower

. It is a
power
that counteracts the
uncircumcision of our
flesh, a
power
that counteracts the

trespasses of our
actions.

**In your new heart God
has freed you from the
power
of sin.**

3.

Disarmed...shame...triumphing over 15

1.

He has freed you from the power of sin within you, from the power of indwelling sin, the power of sin in your actions. But He has also

freed you from the power of the sinful world which seeks to take you captive to the principle, the guilt, and the power of sin. God has freed you from this external power of sin in the world by Christ conquering those powers on the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities,

and put them to open
shame, by triumphing
over them on the cross.

2.

Temptations –
Christ conquered the
ultimate temptation to not
die on the cross

3.

Accusations –
Christ was accused
falsely, but bore the
accusations we deserve

4.

Misery – He was o

ppressed

and

afflicted

, yet He opened not His
mouth. “

4 Surely he has borne our

griefs

and carried our

sorrows

; yet we esteemed him
stricken, smitten by God,

and afflicted. 5 But he
was
wounded

for our transgressions;
he was
crushed

for our iniquities; upon
him was the
chastisement

that brought us peace,
and with his
stripes

we are healed.

” (

Isaiah 53:4-5

)

5.

Death - Isaiah

53:9

“And

they made his grave with
the wicked and with a

rich man in his
death

, although he had
done no violence, and
there was no deceit in
his mouth.

”

6.

Hell — though He

descended into Hell, “
he was not
abandoned to
Hades
, nor did his flesh see
corruption.
” (

Acts 2:31

)

7.

Control! At every point where the sinful world sought to master Christ, He proved Himself both Master and Savior, both Lord and Christ, as Peter said, “
Let all the house of

Israel therefore
know for certain that
God has made him
both Lord and
Christ, this Jesus
whom you crucified.

” (

Acts 2:36

)

8.

Christ's death was not His defeat. It was His victory. The world did not control Him, but in His death and resurrection He demonstrated Himself to be the Master of

the world, and its
Savior. Paul says in
1 Cor. 2:8

“

,

None of the rulers of
this age
understood this, for if
they had, they would
not have crucified
the Lord of glory.

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9.

Application & Conclusion

1.

Now if Christ has conquered the power of sin on the inside of you, as well as on

the outside by
triumphing over the
powers of this world,
you should not let
yourself be taken
captive by the power
of sin. Paul says in
Gal. 4:8-9,

1.

Galatians 4:8-9

“

8

Formerly, when you
did not know God,
you were enslaved
to those that by
nature are not gods.

9 But now that you

have come to know
God, or rather to be
known by God, how
can you turn back
again to the weak
and worthless
elementary
principles of the
world, whose slaves
you want to be once

more?

”

2.

The world will ask
you to worship

things which are not
gods. The world will
call you to believe
in the basic
elements it claims
are at the root of
everything
else—the world will
say the basic

elements are earth,
air, fire, water,
molecules, atoms,
subatomic particles,
physical material,
information,
psychological
drives, personal
pleasure, prestige,

money, success. It will ask you to worship these things, to depend on these things. It will make you feel guilty for not measuring up to the standards of the

world, and make
you wonder if real
forgiveness and
reconciliation is
possible in this life.
It will seek to take
you captive, and
keep you in its
cage. And it will

seek to convince
you that you
destined for
punishment by God
or by the powers
and authorities of
this world.

3.

The world would
be right if one fact
were not true. The
fact is that *Jesus
Christ died for your
sins and rose from
the dead to give you
life* .

And because of

Jesus Christ you
have a new heart,
you have a new
record, and you
have a new life.
You have a heart
set free by Christ,
set free from the
principle, and the

guilt, and the power
of sin.

4.

John 16:33: “In
the world you will
have tribulation. But
take heart,

” Jesus says, “
I have overcome the
world.
”

5.

Heb. 2:8:

Though “
we do not yet see
everything in
subjection to
” Christ,

6.

**Rom. 8:21: in
the end creation
will “ b
e set free from its
bondage to decay
and obtain the
glorious liberty of
the children of
God**

”

7.

Rom. 8:38-39:
and so we know
that in the present

“

n

either death nor
life,...nor
rulers...nor
powers,...nor
anything else in
all creation, will be
able to separate
us from the love

of God in Christ
Jesus our Lord.

”

8.

And because of

that love even
today “ they who
wait for the LORD
shall renew their
strength; they
shall mount up
with wings like
eagles

; they shall run
and not be weary;
they shall walk
and not faint.

”

(

Isaiah 40:31

)

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