

Alive with Christ (Deuteronomy 10:12-18 & Colossians 2:6-15)

16-Sep-2018

G'day everyone.

We're continuing our series on the Apostle Paul's letter to the church of the Colossians. So please have your Bibles opened to Colossians chapter 2 from verse 6.

Let me ask God to help us in our understanding of this passage.

Let's pray...

INTRO

I'm not sure if we have any doctors or nurses with us this morning/evening.

But a question to begin with?

How can we check if someone is alive?

[PowerPoint 1-Signs of life]

1. Kick them? - well actually gentle poke or shake?
2. Check pulse - hold fingertips on wrist or neck?
3. Hold a tiny mirror - under the person's nose - & see if the mirror fogs up
4. Shine a light in their eyes (use light on our phone) - if their pupil constricts they are probably alive
5. Onion sniff test - or smelling salts
6. Doctors and paramedics use reliable technology - like heart and breathing monitors

Sometimes when someone has had a terrible accident or illness - the hospital attaches them to **life support system**. This device keeps the person alive.

That's all very well to keep someone *physically* alive

But what about being *spiritually* alive?

In our Bible passage today - the Apostle Paul - says we also have a *life support system* for our *spiritual* life too!

And that life support system - is our Lord Jesus!

[PowerPoint 2-Jesus=Life Support]

Jesus Himself - in John 15 - describes Himself as a Vine and us, His people, as branches.

And He says we should bear fruit - by growing more like Him and telling others about Him.

As branches, we can only bear fruit - by remaining attached or connected to Jesus, the Vine - and Jesus warns us in John 15:5 - **apart from Him we can do nothing**

If we remain attached to Jesus, the Vine, we are a healthy living branch - but if we are not attached to Jesus, the Vine, we are a dead branch

The Apostle Paul picks up this same theme in Colossians 2 verses 9-15

And he explains how it is that we are spiritually alive in Jesus -

So we'll look at how we are alive in Jesus first

And then - what our response should be [this morning/evening]

HOW WE ARE ALIVE IN CHRIST (v9-15)

Let's look at verses 9 to 15 together then...

Starting with verses 9 and 10

[PowerPoint 3-v9-10]

⁹ For *in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives* in bodily form, ¹⁰ and in Christ *you have been brought to fullness*. He is the head over every power and authority.

What Paul is saying here is:

Everything of God gets expressed in Jesus. Jesus = God. God=Jesus.

We don't need a telescope or a microscope, or a horoscope to realize the fullness of Christ, and the emptiness of the universe without him.

And when we come to believe in Jesus - Paul's saying that fullness of Jesus - comes together for us, too. And Jesus' power extends over everything.

He is head over every power and authority. He is the best - so why would we want anything else? Why would we want something inferior - something 2nd rate, or 2nd best - when we can have a relationship with Jesus - the greatest!

Unlike other religions - that either worship a dead leader whose bones are on this Earth - or they worship statues and idols made out of human hands - we have a living God - Jesus - who is in control of all things. And because we have a relationship with a living God - Paul says - we too - are spiritually alive

(pause)

Paul goes on to say in v11

[PowerPoint 4-v11]

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

Paul's saying - being spiritually alive with Jesus is not something we figure out or achieve ourselves. It's not a matter of being circumcised - like they did in the OT - where a part of a men's flesh was cut off - to show they were one of God's people. No! We're already *in*—we're insiders—by our faith in Jesus - not through some secretive initiation rite but rather through what Jesus has already gone through for us, by destroying the power of sin - on the cross.

And as we believe in Jesus - we receive the Holy Spirit in our hearts - and it's like our hearts are circumcised - and the sinful heart - our sinful flesh or sinful nature - is ripped out - and is replaced with a heart for Jesus - and a love for God - and a love for others. Yes we still sin - but our heart is towards Jesus now - and as we grow in faith and knowledge of Him - we grow more like Him - putting sin off - and living by the Spirit instead. The posh word for this is sanctification!

It's like we've had - a spiritual heart-transplant!

(pause)

Paul continues in v12

[PowerPoint 5-v12]

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.

Paul describes this spiritual heart transplant - by using the example of baptism.

Paul says - it's like if we were baptized in the sea - like Jesus was -

It's like us going under the water - buries our old sinful life

And coming out of the water - is like a resurrection - God raising us from our dead old sinful life - into a new faithful life. Just like God raised Jesus from the dead.

(pause)

Paul goes on to explain in v13

[PowerPoint 6 - V13]

13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,

You see before Jesus came into our lives - and gave us this spiritual heart transplant - we were spiritually dead - we had a sin-dead life. But God has given us a new life. We're born again. Born from above - through the Holy Spirit. AND - all our sins are forgiven. The slate is wiped clean. The posh word for this process is justification - "just as if" we never sinned!

Let's pause for a moment and think about this forgiveness from God - God says He removes our sins as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12). In other words - all our sins are as far away as they possibly can be. Behind God's back! Remembered no more! Totally deleted from His database!

I wonder if we forgive like that? Or do we bring up past "forgiven" offences - the next time we have a disagreement with someone?

It's worth remembering - Jesus' warning from Matthew 6:14-15:

14 ... if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. **15** But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Is there someone - we need to forgive?

(pause)

Paul goes on to explain further how the process of forgiveness works in v14

[PowerPoint 7-v14]

¹⁴ Jesus has canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.

Paul describes the forgiveness process like a court-room scene. We're in the dock in court - accused of many sins. And the punishment for sin is death (Romans 3:23) - but instead of getting punished - Jesus takes our sins - nails them to His cross. He takes our punishment - and our death. And we go free - and we are alive - and not condemned anymore!

And not only that - Paul says in v15 - that Jesus

[PowerPoint 8-v15]

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

What Paul is saying here - is that those who killed Jesus - namely - the Jews, the Romans - and the spiritual forces of Satan - they all thought they had a victory by getting rid of Jesus - but Jesus' death was all part of God's plan to fix sin. And Jesus didn't stay dead - God raised Him - He is alive!

So the 2 problems this world can't get rid of - sin and death!

Jesus has defeated them both - and made a mockery of all evil forces and powers in this world!

As a result we are totally forgiven and alive in Jesus - with the promise of life into eternity because of Jesus.

(pause)

Wow!

OUR RESPONSE (vv6-8)

So if we are alive in Jesus Christ

[PowerPoint 9-Heading]

What should our response be [this morning/evening]?

Paul gives us 2 responses in verses 6 to 8:

The **first response** is in verses 6 and 7

[PowerPoint 9a-Response 1]

Paul's instruction is simple and straightforward: Just go ahead with what we've been given. We've received Jesus, the Master, the Best, - now we must **live him**.

Our lives must be deeply rooted in Jesus - we're the branches attached to Jesus the vine - we need to grow in knowledge and love for Him - and build our lives on the rock solid foundation of Jesus - who has defeated sin and death. And as we live this life in Jesus - it should be overflowing in thankfulness for what Jesus has done for us.

If we were drowning in a rip at Soldiers Beach - and someone came in and saved us from drowning. We'd be eternally grateful to the person who saved us - wouldn't we?

In the same way - Jesus - is our lifesaver - we should be eternally grateful for what He has done for us.

And we should want to know more about Him, to love Him more, to be more like Him, to have a deeper and closer relationship with Him?

How do we do this?

Spending time with Jesus - in prayer, in the Bible, in Growth Groups - in fellowship with His people - and being obedient to His Holy Word and Commands.

And remembering what we've learnt so far from this book of Colossians:

- Having a double commitment to loving Jesus and loving others
- Remembering Jesus is supreme because: Jesus is God, Jesus is the Creator, Jesus is our Saviour
- Remembering we are servants of the Gospel (Good News of Jesus) - just like Paul was a servant - just as Jesus was a servant

So what action do we need to take to live our lives in Jesus, rooted and built on Him?

(pause)

And if we have someone here [this morning/evening] who hasn't received Jesus yet. Now is a great time to repent - and say sorry to God for our sins - and ask Jesus to come into our heart.

{And you can talk to me after}

The second response is in v8

[PowerPoint 9b-Response 2]

Don't get sucked in by hollow and deceptive philosophy, human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world - rather than on Christ.

What does Paul mean here?

We had many examples in our Growth Groups this week:

Basically we shouldn't be getting sucked in to teachings or worship practices or traditions that are not in the Bible and have them taking priority over our worship of Jesus - who is our number one priority.

Here's some examples of false teaching and philosophies:

1. Thinking the most important person is **ourselves** - like we're our own God - and we have the freedom to do whatever pleases us and makes us happy - even if what we're doing is sinful and against God's rules! Jesus is number one - not us
2. Worshipping **creation ahead of God** - or thinking God is creation - and thinking that God is not above all things
3. Thinking **Jesus is not God** - but just a great teacher or just a prophet - as some religions do. We've learnt from Colossians already that Jesus is God - and needs to be worshipped as such
4. Putting **angels, saints and Mary on equal footing with Jesus** - and worshipping and praying to them - when we should be worshipping God alone and praying directly to God!
5. Insisting on **religious festivals and traditions** and insisting on certain **food restrictions and dietary requirements** and insisting on a certain **version of the Bible** as the only version to use.
6. Looking at **stars or star signs and horoscopes or consulting clairvoyants or psychics** to see what our future holds. Instead of trusting in God with all our heart, mind and strength - and relying on His will for our lives
7. Believing in philosophies like **karma** - the Aussie expression for that is "what goes around comes around". The Bible doesn't teach that!

Instead, the Bible shows us that bad things happen to bad people and bad things can also happen to good people. And sometimes bad people go unpunished in this world - but ultimately they have to face God in judgment - as we all do!

God doesn't operate under a scheme of one to one punishment for every sin. Instead God is merciful and shows grace and offers forgiveness in Jesus. Yes - there are always consequences for sin - and some consequences are more severe than others - but God is not some Karma God - who always pays back in kind!

There are many other examples of false teaching, philosophies and traditions - we could mention.

But the bottom line is - the Holy Bible - is our supreme standard - which is why I encourage us - each week - to have our Bibles open as we look at the Bible passage together!

CONCLUSION

So to sum up then...

[Powerpoint 10-Conclusion]

1. We have a Saviour - Jesus - who is the best and He's all we need - and He is **ALIVE**
2. And because we are attached to Him in our faith - **we are spiritually ALIVE too** - and unlike other religions - **we have Assurance of life now - in Christ - and life into eternity...**

Let's pray...