



Message **Transcript**

Lordship Benefits

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I had the chance of playing on several different sports teams growing up, some exceptionally good, some exceptionally bad and some mediocre. And as I was preparing my message this week, I thought about my high school football coach a lot because my high school football team in my junior and senior year went 27-1. We were 14-0 my senior year. We won the state championship and I go back oftentimes and think about some of the things that my high school football coach taught us. And he was so drilled down, detail oriented on every little thing. We only ran about 10 different plays, but for our offense and our defense, it was all about execution. And so, even as we went through the repetitive motions over and over, I can still hear things in the back of my mind like "Practice doesn't make perfect. Perfect practice makes perfect."

"You're going to play like you practice so come to practice as if it's the most important thing you're going to do." And he really believed that repetition was the mother of learning, and so by doing things over and over and over and over again, so that you would get them so that you would own them, so you would practice. By the time we got to the games, games were easy compared to what our practices were. Here in God's word this morning, you're going to hear something that you've heard over and over and over again. And the danger in hearing something in God's word that you've already heard before is to falsely think, "I already know this." Or, to falsely think, "I already own this." Or, or to falsely believe I'm already by faith putting this into practice. When things in God's word are repeated, they are there as a megaphone to say make sure you get this.

And as Paul is writing to the Colossian church, he is writing to them, letting them

understand that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is paramount to all that he's teaching, and that there are benefits in your life as a believer with Jesus Christ being Lord. And so, what we're going to take a look at this morning are benefits of Jesus Christ being the Lord of your life. I called it Lordship Benefits. And if you have a copy of God's word, I invite you to open up today to Colossians 2:8-15. If you don't have a copy, they're under every chair. I encourage you to get a copy of God's word so that you can read along as well. I'll read the verses out loud, and then we will unpack them together taking a look at these benefits that we have from the Lord.

Notice verse eight, see to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. For in him, all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form. And in him, you have been made complete, and he is the head overall rule and authority. And in him, you are also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands in the removal of the body of flesh, by the circumcision of Christ. Having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with him through faith in the working of God who raised him from the dead. When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he made you alive together with him having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us.

And he has now taken it out of the way having nailed it to the cross. When he had

disarmed the rulers and authorities, he made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through him. And here in this short text, we're going to see some repetitive words that the Apostle Paul has been telling us about benefits of Jesus Christ being Lord. I want to highlight four of the benefits of the lordship of Christ today as we take a look at this text. Now these are important. Notice verse eight. I mean, I believe that chapter two almost could have ended in verse seven, but God saw it by his grace to include the rest of the chapter, to talk about some things that could creep in because we just finished last week saying that therefore, as we received Jesus Christ as Lord, so walk in him because we've been rooted and now we're established and we're being built up, overflowing with gratitude.

And you could say, "That's great. Let's move on." But he wants to make sure that we understand what he's been talking about. So notice what he says in verse eight, see to it that no one takes you captive. See to it. Pay careful attention to this. Just because you know the truth doesn't mean that you're walking in the truth. To be taken captive means to be taken away and held as prisoner. That's what it means to be taken captive. Be careful that in your Christian freedom that you have, that you are not taken away captive in your faith. It means this. It means you can be a Christian to the full and live under bondage even though you are a Christian. He says, "Pay careful attention to this one. See to it that no one, no circumstance, no person, nothing takes you captive so that you can be walking in him."

Now notice what he says what could take you captive. That you're not taking captive through philosophy and empty deception according to the tradition of men,

according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. Here's benefit number one, Lordship benefit number one is in Christ you have complete sufficiency. In Christ, you have complete sufficiency. You have everything you need in Christ, which is why he says now make sure ... because we've already talked about this ... make sure that no one deceives you or leads you away. This empty deception is this deceit that we talked about, your enemy, the devil does for you. He lies to you. He deceives you into thinking that there's something that you need other than Christ for what you are looking for.

Let me be crystal clear. Whatever you're looking for in your life and whatever you need in your life right now, it's all found in the person and work of the Lord, Jesus Christ. There's nowhere else you need to look. There's nowhere else you need to look. It's all in Jesus. Well, I need a job. I need money. I need help. It's all in Jesus. Everything you need for life and godliness is in him.

The deception of the enemy and people he uses is to get you to falsely think that there's something you're looking for outside of the person and work of the Lord, Jesus Christ. In Christ is everything you need. Now, what does he say? He says don't be let astray or taken captive through what? Philosophy or empty deception. This word philosophy is made from two Greek words, phileo, love and Sophia, wisdom. Philosophy. It's the love of wisdom. Now here, when he's talking about wisdom ... remember, last week we talked about knowledge, wisdom and understanding, and we talked about knowledge according to God is knowing what God says is true?

Wisdom is the supernatural practice of that truth, and learning how to put it into

practice and understanding is once you know the truth, have practiced the truth and are living in the truth, now you have understanding or awareness how it works. This is different. The philosophy he's talking about here are people that love worldly wisdom. Don't be led astray by worldly wisdom and the traditions of men. Just because your mom and dad said it doesn't make it true. Just because your coach says it doesn't make it true. Just because somebody you respect says it doesn't make it true. Don't be led astray by what other people say that have the allurement of something that's really, really good. You can go to the bookstore. I told you last week, you can go to the self-help section. You can go to the quote section that you would put in your bathroom.

And, you read all these quotes, "Oh, that's so good." Read Twitter feeds. All it is is quotes. "Oh, that's so good. That's so wise. That's so good." Some of them maybe, but if they're not aligned on the word of God, they're not ultimately going to be helpful to you. And, why is this so important? Because what God is doing, God is doing a supernatural work in every area of our life, so we need supernatural answers for what we're going to need.

Take marriage, for instance. Marriage is a supernatural entity designed by God for his glory. When you read through Ephesians 5, it's not just a marriage self-help section. It is how the marriage of two individuals come together as one and how that oneness is all intended to glorify God and be a picture of the gospel. That marriage is instituted by God as a husband and wife, and when they've come together and they've

said vows, they're not two individuals that leave together that live under the same roof that share finances and a bank account and bills and kids.

They are now one. And in the oneness, the man is head of the wife and in the oneness, the wife submits to her husband and everything. Why? So, that they demonstrate what the Gospel of Jesus Christ looks like. So if you're going to get answers about your marriage, you better get answers from the Lord Jesus Christ directly from his word, because it's supernatural.

Here's the problem. We think, "Well, I'm saved. So Jesus was good for my salvation, but now I got problems in my marriage and I need to go see a counselor." And I would tell you this. If the counselor is going to go to the word of God and give you supernatural answers from the word of God for your marriage, that can be a really good thing. If the counselor that you go to is going to give you worldly answers, what they think is good, it will count for nothing.

We went to a counselor. He said we had communication issues. Duh, you're a man. She's a woman. You already have communication issues. We see the world different. Well, duh, you had different life experiences. We have irreconcilable differences. Duh, you had that before you got married. See, the Gospel is not about how you feel. The Gospel is about what God said he instituted it for, which means he's got answers of taking two sinners that are totally for themselves, bringing them together under his umbrella of grace, and doing it in a way that demonstrates that Jesus Christ is Lord. You can't get those answers outside of God's word. And, it's true for anything. It's true for finances. It's true for health. It's true for interpersonal

relationships. It's true for forgiveness. Don't go outside of Jesus. In him, you have everything you need. The lie of the enemy is to say Jesus is not enough.

Jesus was enough to get you saved maybe, but there's other things out here you need to learn to really grow in your faith. Wrong every single time. In him and him alone, you have every single thing that you need. Amen? And that's good news because when we're out there thinking that there's something out there that we don't have and where am I going to find it, it's very different than knowing I have everything at my disposal. And, why is it important? He tells us, notice verse nine, if you believe God's word, you have to believe this. It says this, for in him, all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form. When you see who Jesus is revealed as in the scriptures, and when we see the fullness of who he is someday in glory, you will know that in him, all the deity of God dwells. The fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ.

When we see Jesus Christ, we see God in flesh. He is 100% God, which means he's always been and always will be, and he's 100% human. He's both. He's God in flesh. The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. When we study Jesus, we're not just studying a historic character. We're not just studying some spirit out floating around. We are studying the God of the universe made manifest in flesh, and in Christ, when we see Jesus Christ, we see the fullness of all that God is. Jesus wasn't less than God. He is God. He was God. He will always be God. Amen. And in him, we have that, which is why verse 10 is so important. And in him, you have been made complete. Whoa, you've been made complete in him. Because Jesus Christ is fully God, when you trusted Christ, you are in him.

You'll see these words all over the place. Not just in the book of Colossians, but everywhere. Notice in verse seven, we've been built up in him. Verse nine, for in him, all the fullness dwells. Verse 10, and in him, you have been made. Verse 11, and in him ... What is this whole in him concept? Picture a woman pregnant with a child inside of her. Child's in utero. How dependent is the child upon mom? 100%. For nourishment, nutrients, oxygen, life. The umbilical cord takes everything of mom and gives it to the baby in utero.

Baby is in mom. As a believer, here's the truth, you're in Christ. Everything you need comes from him. You've been given everything you need for life and godliness in him. And Jesus goes so far as to say, "Apart from me, you can do nothing." Because you're not connected. So our Christian life is completely sufficient in Christ. When we trust in him, notice what the Bible says, already we have been made complete. I mean, did you hear that this morning? I feel like we need to go over it because there was not enough cheering when I read it.

It says, and in him you have been made complete. I think for many of us, we think one day I'll be complete. One day I'll be made complete. I look in the mirror and I see my behaviors and I see the sin that still hangs on to me, and I say, "I'm not complete yet. One day I'll be complete." No. In him, in Christ, because of my belief in him, I have been made complete. I am already whole. I am already perfected in him.

Now, notice Paul's ministry in Colossians 1:28 if you go back up. He said he wanted to present every man what? Complete in Christ. That was his ministry. He was

laboring and striving to see every man complete in Christ. What's God tell us here? Everyone who has put their faith and trust in the gospel of Jesus Christ has been what? Made complete.

Now what does that mean? It means I start living out of a place of wholeness rather than out of a place of brokenness. When I live out of a place of brokenness, and I feel as if, and I falsely think, I've not there yet ... the blood of Jesus forgave me, but I still got to work really, really hard. It's very different than I know not only did the blood of Jesus Christ forgive me, but gave me life in his name and in Christ, I am already complete in him. I'm living from wholeness. See, the enemy wants to lie to you and tell you that you do not have what you need. So, he'll lie to you and tell you that you're broken. You're no good. You're a loser. You're lousy. He'll even call you by your sin names, like you're anorexic, you're a drunk, you're a drug user, you're a sinner.

You're all these things. You're bad. You're bad. You're bad. Jesus doesn't talk to his saints that way. You're a saint. You're a holy person. You identify with Christ. It's who you are. You're already have been made whole. Why? Because Jesus Christ is perfect, and you are in him. So when the father looks with his divine S-O-N son-glasses, he sees you as already having been made complete. You don't see it. You don't feel it, but it's true. And when you own it, you live your life differently. Amen?

Now here's why this is so important. Because if this sets you free, what does the devil want to do? He wants to keep you in bondage. John 10:10 tells us the devil only comes for three reasons, right? To steal, to kill and destroy. Well, what's he stealing? He can't steal your salvation. The Bible makes it crystal clear that for those who have

trusted in the Lord, Jesus Christ, you are his and no one but no one can snatch you out of his hand. The devil can't steal your salvation.

What can he steal? He can steal your joy. He can rob your identity. He can get you to believe that you are something that you're not. And so, he lies and he gets you to live then in bondage rather than in the freedom that you've been given in Christ. He wants to kill you. Just know this. He hates all people, specifically targets Christians. He would love for you to be dead. Do I need to pray for Satan? No, don't pray for him. Don't even talk to him. Focus on Jesus and the complete sufficiency you have in him.

Steal, kill and then what else does he want to do with your life? Destroy it. He hates you. He hates your family. He hates your relationships. He hates your relationship with Jesus. He wants to destroy it all. This is why when you understand that Jesus is completely sufficient, scriptures will leap off the page like this, like Galatians 5:1. You can write these verses down. I'm going to read them too fast. This is just some verses. Galatians 5:1 says it is for freedom that Christ Jesus has set us free. Therefore, no longer submit to a yoke of slavery. Well, what's a yoke of slavery? A yoke of slavery is if you've been declared free, but you live as though you're a slave to your sin. Even though you are free, you're not living as though you're free. You're still in bondage.

And it's for freedom that Jesus set you free, so live free. 2 Corinthians 10:5 says that's why we need to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. Why? Because, the enemy will lie to you all the time. I don't care whether you've been a

Christian for three minutes, or whether you're thinking about giving your life to Christ and letting him be the Lord or whether you've been a Christian for 30 years. Here's the lie. If Jesus is the Lord of your life in the foolish measure, you're going to miss out on blank. You're going to lose blank. Your life's going to be less than because of blank. In other words, the lie in your life at all times is don't go all in with Jesus.

If you go all in with Jesus, you're going to be in a missionary in a hut in Africa and you're going to be totally miserable. So, go in a little bit. Don't go all the way in. It's a lie. Whatever he tells you when you want to go all in with Jesus and you feel like you can't, it's always a lie. I'll meet guys that are my age that have felt called to be a pastor for 20 some years, and they'll say things to me like this, "Well, when I retire, then I'm going to be a pastor." And my answer is always, "No, you won't. If God's calling you to be a pastor and you've been disobedient this long, why are you going to be any less disobedient 20 years from now? Go do it. What would keep you from doing it?" Whatever answer they tell me, that's the lie.

Well, God couldn't provide for my family anymore. God couldn't do this. I don't know, I'm too old to go to school. Lie, lie, lie. Whatever God calls you to be in Christ, you have everything you will ever need to live those things out. So then this begs this question, because every single one of you is saying, "Okay, I agree with you, Pastor Jeff. That's awesome. Jesus is completely sufficient for our life in him." Here's my question. Is he for you personally? Is there any area in your life to that you look outside of the person and work of Jesus for your growth in him? Better question is where is the area in your life that you're tempted to look outside of Jesus Christ for your continued

growth in him? And wherever it is, just repent of that and just say, "Jesus, I've been looking over here in addition to you." It's Jesus Christ and him alone.

John 8 says in John 8:31, if you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. Jesus said in John 17:17 that word is truth. And in 2 Corinthians 3:17, and where the spirit of the Lord is in that truth, there is freedom. Now, why is this so important? Because, the devil knows the back half of the verse of John 10:10. He came to steal, kill and destroy but why did Jesus come? So that you would have life and have it more abundantly. Or, you'd have life and you'd have it to the full. The devil knows that for every single person out there, when a non-believer gives their life to Christ and when a believer continues to walk in the full Lordship of Christ, in that there is such joy and freedom and hope and expectation that he doesn't want us to live like that.

So for the non-believer, he blinds them to the truth of the Lordship, and for the believer, he lies to keep you from enjoying what is already rightfully yours. Think about it this way. If you had access to the President of the United States, or if you had access to a billionaire, or you had access to somebody that had power over an entire company, the job you were looking to go see ... If you were seeking a job at IBM, but you knew the CEO and were best friends, would you worry about your interview? Would you care? You know the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords and the one who rules and reigns, and nothing happens apart from his goodness and in him and in him alone is every thing you will ever need.

In this series of focus, here's what he's saying. Focus on Jesus, and in him alone

because in him, the full deity of the Godhead dwells, and in him, you have been made complete already. Isn't that good news? You're already whole in him. And notice what he says, "Well, how do you know how much power he has?" Look at the back half of verse 10. He is the head over all rule and authority. Well, what kind of rule and authority does he have? Well, Colossians 1:16 tells us for by him, all things were created both in the heavens and on the earth, visible and invisible. Whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things have been created through him and for him. So what is he authoritative over? All things. All things. Things in Heaven and on earth, things you see and don't see. He's authoritative over them all. All.

So there's nothing in your life he does not have authority over. Here's what the enemy will do. He'll lie to you and tell you your circumstance can't change. Your circumstance can't change. You're always going to be like this. You're always going to act like this. Your marriage is always going to look like this. Your dating relationships are always going to be like this. You're never going to get that job. You're never going ... because this is who you are. You're bad. No, no, no. I'm already complete in Christ and he's the Lord of my life, and he has rule and authority over all things. You can't talk to me like that. Every situation I'm in, he's Lord over all of them. There's nowhere that he doesn't rule in Heaven or on earth. Isn't that good news this morning? And that's who we're connected to in our walk with him.

And so Paul is making sure that we don't have our sufficiency stripped away from us by someone who is taking us captive, be it the devil and his minions or somebody

who's falsely teaching or somebody who tells us that there's secret knowledge out there that we need to have. You're completely sufficient in Christ.

The second benefit of Jesus Christ being Lord is this. It's Christlike identity. We've been touching on this already. It's Christlike identity. Notice what he says in verse 11, and in him ... there's that in him again ... you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands in the removal of the body of flesh by the circumcision of Christ. Now, God established the covenant of circumcision with the nation of Israel. It was an outward demonstration of a removal of flesh demonstrating that man was born sinful, and by this covenant where the male child will be circumcised on the eighth day, it was a reminder that only by God's hand and his removal of their sin, could they be in right relationship with him.

But the nation of Israel, much like many of us, got into the routine of doing something without understanding what was being done. Can I tell you what happened on the cross? When Jesus Christ laid down his life on the cross and he died for the sins of the world and he was buried and he rose from the grave, everyone who has repented and trusted in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of his or her sin has been spiritually circumcised. Not a physical circumcision, but a spiritual circumcision that Christ does where he takes that heart of flesh that we had that was rebellious to him in every way, where we were dead in our sins, where we wanted nothing to do with God. And, he took that away so that we would have the desire to worship him. And he's the one that cut that out to show us that we could be in covenant with himself. And, Jesus Christ did all the work.

It means that our identity is Christ. It means that our life is Christ. It means that we are in Christ. And who did all this? Jesus did. This removal of the body of flesh means that he stripped it off. He took away that which was hostile to him so that we could be in love with him. And notice what verse 12 says, still talking spiritually, having been buried ... here we go ... with him in baptism, in which you are also raised up with him through faith in the working of God who raised him from the dead. He's talking about the picture of the Gospel that Jesus Christ, who died for our sins and was buried, is now raised. And what happened was in the Gospel, when we trust in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of our sins, we too have been circumcised. A circumcision not done with hands. It's a circumcision spiritually done by Christ, where he removes that body of flesh which was hostile to him so we could love him.

We've been buried therefore with him by baptism into death, meaning we've been immersed in the death of Christ, which means that all our sins have been forgiven. They've been washed away and because Jesus Christ rose, we've also been raised with Christ. Ephesians 2:6 says that we've been placed in the heavenly realms, positioned in the heavenly realms with Christ. So our identity is Christ. Now, think about this. You've been made complete. You've been seen perfect by the Father. Not because of anything you've done, but because of by believing that through the death of Jesus on the cross and in the cross, you have life and have life in his name. It's who you are, which means this. You can't talk to yourself by the names that the enemy likes to give you. Sinner, loser, broken marriage, divorce, mean, angry. Those are earthly terms.

You are a child of the most high God, and you are beloved and you are holy and you are chosen before the foundation of the world, and his love is on you. His favor is on you. His grace is on you. You are his beloved daughter or you are his choice son, and in him you have righteousness and the forgiveness of sins. You've been made perfect in him. You're a co-heir in Christ in all of his riches. That's who you are, right? Isn't that good news? That felt like a golf clap. I mean, come on.

Thank you. I mean, seriously, we think the Gospel's just about getting a get out of hell free card. That's a great benefit that we don't have to spend eternity in hell. One of the benefits is I'm identified with Christ, and while I can look in the mirror and see all the things that are wrong with me that don't align with Christ, God, the Father, through the blood of Jesus, doesn't see me that way. He sees me as whole and complete and perfected and loving and kind and righteous and good. And, that is who I am. Once you believe in who your identity is in Christ, it will change your life. If I'm having to work for that rather than live in that, my life different. See, religion tells you here's what you must do in order to get right with God. Christianity says, "Here's what God did to make you right with himself."

See, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, there's only one performance worth noting in the entire Bible, and it's Jesus Christ's death, burial and resurrection. That was the key performance in the entire pages of scripture. There's nothing you're ever going to do that's going to even come close to out-shining his performance. He did all the performance. You, in him, just get to bask in the identity that you've already been given in Christ. Now, why is that important? Well, because when people come to Christ, we

tell them, and rightly so, no matter what you've done, no matter where you've been, no matter what you've thought or said, it's all forgiven under the blood of Christ. Which, is totally true. But, what do we tell the Christian? You should have known better. You shouldn't have done that. You've been walking with the Lord 20 years and you're still sinning like that?

How come your behavior hasn't changed? How come you still swear? How come you still smoke? How come you still drink? How come, how come, how come? And, we shame believers rather than understanding if you knew who you are, you would walk in a different sense of freedom. When the Bible says that you are crowned with glory and honor, and a little less than God, I'm not that, but because of who I am in Christ, I am. It means I'm completely cleansed. It means I'm completely whole. It means my sin has been paid for. Myself has been crucified. The law has been fulfilled in Christ and the world has been conquered by Jesus, and that's who I'm in. So I'm completely sufficient in Christ. And, my identity is wrapped in Christ so I don't live in fear, doubt, shame, or guilt anymore. And, I'm not going to let the enemy or anyone else lie to me and take away who I actually am.

This is who I am. I'm a child of the king and I'm already complete in him. Amen? And by the way, if you've trusted in Christ, that's who you are too. And when you start living as if you're the child of the king and you know how much he loves you, it's different than if you're trying to please this king that's unpleasable. This is stuff Paul wanted us to know. When I started believing this, my life in Christ took off to a whole

new level, and it's hard to do because there will be lies that come in your head all the time where you'll say, "I'm stupid. I'm no good. I'm lousy." This week I was out in Vegas for a prayer conference. I landed in Vegas on Monday at the airport. I was with my brother, and I had been watching a movie on my headphones on my phone ... I had my headphones on.

So, I wasn't paying attention to where our luggage was. And I asked my brother, "Where are we at?" He said, "Well, it's luggage terminal 22." And I said, "Well, where do we go?" He's like, "Well, we just got to get on this train." So I got on the train, didn't think about it. We went from terminal one to terminal three, got there, looking over all the luggage. We went to every single one. There was no baggage claim, 22. So I went to the lady, I'm like, "Hey, is there a 22?" She's like, "Yeah, that's back in terminal one." I'm like, "Well, how do we get back there?" She's like, "Well, there's no train. Now you got to go wait for a bus." We had to wait another half an hour to catch the bus to go back to terminal one.

If we had just walked down the stairs, we could have picked up our luggage. Now what happens when these things happen? Normally, our identity gets robbed for a moment. It's not like, "Well, I'm crowned with glory and honor, and a little less than God, and I'm redeemed and I'm a saint." No. If you have a younger brother, it goes something like, "Why did you listen to your brother?" And then blame starts coming out in, "Why did you leave us there?" And, we can talk about him because he's not here today. Right? Do you see how that happens in your life? It happens in a marriage. It happens in relationship. It happens in church. It happens all the time where identity

gets robbed and then we feel like we're less than, and so we respond accordingly.

But when we know who we are, we don't worry anymore because no matter where we go and no matter where we're at, and no matter what happens, we know that we're a child of the king and he loves us with an unconditional love. Amen. That's called identity in Christ. It's yours to take ownership of. So, here's the question. Here's the question. My question is not do you like this? My question isn't isn't this good, because it is. My question is where in your life are you still living performance-based Christianity rather than ownership-based identity on who God says you are? Because the greatest joy in your life comes from ownership-based identity, and if there's something in your life that doesn't align with who you are in Christ, the reason you want to change it to align with Christ is not so that other Christians feel comfortable with you. It's not so that you can get God off your back.

It's because in Christ and in him alone is greatest joy and freedom that you can ever experience. It's an invitation to everything God would have for you. It's complete sufficiency. It's Christlike identity.

And now, let me give you a third. This could be my favorite. They all build on each other. It's comprehensive forgiveness. It's comprehensive forgiveness. Notice what the word says. When you were dead in your transgressions ... so let's just make this clear. Every one of you was born dead in your transgressions. Every person here is and was born spiritually dead. Everyone was born spiritually dead. Every single person. If you don't get that part of theology and own it, it makes it hard to understand the Gospel because you'll see somebody that lives a long time that seemingly lived a

good life, that was philanthropic or nice and you'll be like, "How could God send someone like that to hell?"

How could he do that when they're actually a good person? No, no, no. They're dead in their transgressions and sins. Transgressions mean willful actions that go against God. It means every single person here didn't just slip and sin one day, didn't have a couple minor ones. All of us here have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God by knowing what God wanted and going just the opposite way. That's true of all humanity. And when you were that way, for those of you who are believers, here's what God did. When you were dead in your transgressions and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, meaning you were still living hostile to God, what did he do? He made you alive together with him. You were dead. How did you become alive?

He made you alive. What's the Gospel? Death to life. That's it, right? Death to life. Every time someone is saved, it is spiritual death to spiritual life. It is death to vitality. That's the Gospel. Somebody that was bad didn't become good. Somebody that was good didn't necessarily become better. Somebody who was spiritually rebellious and dead became alive. That's the Gospel. Who did it? Jesus. How did he do it? Through the cross, his death, burial and resurrection. And, now in him you have access to him through him, complete life in his name. And what did he do?

I love these verses. Get your eyes on the text. You got to see it for yourself. Having forgiven us ... what do the next three words say? All our transgressions. Whoa. How many sins did he forgive? All. You ever thought about that for a minute? I don't

know about you, but could you maybe help me out just a little bit? Who here maybe in the last week, month or year that there's some sin that you've sinned that if you could go back and do it, you wouldn't have sinned that sin? Just by show of hands. Anybody? Okay. If you didn't raise your hand, you're telling us some of your sins. It's pride or you're not paying attention. So, the point is all of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And even after we become Christians, how many sins did he forgive? He forgave them all.

It means he forgave the humongous ones that you say, "I know he forgave all my sins, but this one still haunts me from back here and I wish that I never had been a part of." That's gone. The teeny little ones that nobody else knows about that you think aren't that big of a deal. Gone. The medium sized ones, gone. The relational ones, gone. The mental sins, gone. The ones that you've acted on, gone. The ones that you wish you would've acted on, but you didn't because the restraining power of the Holy Spirit didn't let you, like when you were driving on I-25 and somebody cut you off and you didn't do what you wanted to do, but your heart said, "Do it." That's forgiven, too. It's personal testimony.

The ones that bother you, forgiven. The ones that don't bother you, forgiven. They're all gone. Jesus is the greatest debt collector of all time. You owe him with your life. You will pay for it with your soul unless the cross of Christ has paid for you. Amen. Now at the cross, we have all our sins forgiven. It may is when you come to Christ, it means everything up until the time you came to Christ, it's all washed away. I'm not talking about covered over and you have to think about it. I'm talking about whoosh. I'm

talking about flushed. I'm talking about it's gone. You'll never see it again. Also at the cross, all your present current sins washed away. Even the ones that you've been thinking during church while I'm preaching, those are washed away. The ones that God knows you're going to sin later today, tomorrow, next week, those are washed away too.

It means you have complete forgiveness. You know what complete comprehensiveness is? I used to sell life insurance. Let tell you about comprehensive. Comprehensive means total and complete. If you ever rented a car and you go up to the dealer, what do they want to sell you? They want to sell you comprehensive insurance. Comprehensive means this. They'll try to sell you the one that's \$59 a day extra because they want you to have the insurance that if anything happens to your car, somebody keys it, they write on it with a pen, you spill it you get knocked, it's your fault in the accident, whatever happens, they'll take care of everything. You don't even need to worry about it. You don't need to go through your insurance company. It's comprehensive.

Here's what happened on the cross. It was comprehensive forgiveness for everyone who believes. Listen to me, listen to me, listen to me. It means if you're not a believer Jesus Christ paid the penalty for your sin, it's available to you to have all your sins forgiven. You just must repent and believe in him. And then he'll take all your sin and he'll give you all his righteousness. If you are a believer, it means this. All of your sin has already been forgiven. So when I sin, then why do I confess my sin still if it's already been forgiven? Because presently, I want to experience the washing of his

blood all over me again and again. Amen. And so, I'm like, "Lord, thanks for your forgiveness. Lord, I messed this up again. I did it wrong. And Lord, I thank you that that's not who I am anymore, and I thank you that I have a new identity, and I thank you I have a new life in you, and I thank you that I'm already set apart, and I thank you that I'm holy."

"And Lord, I was wrong and that was sinful and I'm confessing that to you, and I thank you afresh for your forgiveness in my life. You already knew I was going to sin that before I was even created. Praise you, God. Thank you that I have right standing with you and that I'm already complete." Do you see the difference? See, if you don't have that, what you're going to do is you're going to be like, "Ah, I screwed it up again. I screwed it up. I'm going to work harder now." When you start saying the words, "I'm going to work harder," the devil's got you because he knows the Bible better than some of you. Jesus said, "Apart from me, you can do nothing." You're like, "I'm going to work harder." And the devil's like, "Good, you'll do nothing and I will keep you trapped and in bondage all the way here."

See what I'm saying? Jesus is the debt collector. Let me give you an example. My wife and I were on a date here within the last couple years. We were eating at a restaurant and we enjoyed our meal. We were having fun together. And at the end of the meal, the server came to bring bill. And when he came to bring our bill, here's what he said, "Just want you to know your bill's already been taken care of. There's somebody that was here in the restaurant tonight that paid for it." And so, we started looking around the restaurant to say, "Well, who was it? Are they still here?" He's like,

"They're not here anymore." So if it was you, thanks. Now, if you ever see Kim and I out having a meal and you want to try it again, go ahead.

When that happened, I did not reach for my wallet and say, "Well, I want to pay too. Let me chip in some more. That's not fair. They shouldn't have paid for me. I did nothing to deserve it. I didn't do anything to earn their favor and they just paid it all?" Such a great picture of the cross, isn't it? He paid it all. He didn't pay for dinner. He paid for all of our sins that we would ever sin. He paid for our sin nature that was hostile to him. He gave us life in his name and it's completely complete, and there's nothing that you need to do to get right with God. It is all forgiven. Amen. And, amen and amen. And if you don't have that in your life, you can repent of your sins and trust in Jesus, because I'm not talking about religion.

Religion won't do anything for you. Religion teaches you when to stand up and when to sit it down and what to do and what not to do at church, and at some churches, they're even in Latin so you can be like, "Man, I don't even know what they're talking about, but it was really good and it was important that I went." That does nothing for you. Singing hymns or singing contemporary. Well, what should we do? Do both. Just honor God with your life. It's not about religion. It's about a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. That's who it is. That's the good news of the Gospel. You're totally forgiven.

Now, let me tell you this. He says he canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us. He has taken it out of the

way, having nailed it to the cross. I mean, imagine this. Imagine from the time you were born, that every time that you sinned, you just got a post-it note and it just started stacking. How high would that be? For some of you, you'd be looking beyond the moon to see where that thing was. I mean stacks and stacks and stacks. Here's what happened at the cross. He took it all and said it was hostile to us. Well, how's it hostile to us? Because if you live in unforgiveness and you think that you're living in unforgiveness, whether it's relationally with another person or with God, and you think there's no way I can get right with them, it will change the way you relate to that person.

If you live with God in such a way that I can never please him, I can never get right no matter what I do, it's not good enough. It's different. It's hostile to you. What did he do? He took it all away by doing what? He took all your post-it notes and he nailed them to the cross. All the post-it notes that you hold and the ones that you're going to receive later today, and the ones you're going to receive tomorrow. They've already been nailed to the cross. It's taken away. It's expunged. You're declared not guilty. You're declared righteous. It's who you are. You don't live in unforgiveness anymore. You are completely comprehensively, totally 100% forgiven. Is that worthy of praise this morning or what?

And it's not by what you even did. It's all that Christ did. And even if you come to the realization that Jesus Christ is Lord who died for you and rose for you, that wasn't even you either. That was God's grace coming upon you to let you know that you couldn't have found him if he hadn't of come looking for you. He loves you. He cares for

you. Forgiveness is yours for anyone that comes to him. He will never turn away. Now, if you get this, it will change your life. Because the question I have for you is this, not do you believe that God has forgiven your sins, but here's my question. Are you living as if your sins were forgiven?

I want to be crystal on this because I don't want to move on until you get this. Are you living as if your sins are forgiven? Because for some of you, you know you did something wrong. Usually as Christians, it involves our sexuality or our purity. It involves something to do with money. It involves something to do relationally. It involves something we knew better than, and we shouldn't have done it, and we feel scarred or seared in our conscience. And we can know that we're forgiven without living forgiven. So, here's a big difference. One is I know God forgave my sins and thank God I'm going to heaven, and one day it'll all be washed away. Knowing you're forgiven is this. It's already washed away. Praise God, I don't have to hold onto the guilt and shame of that anymore. And yeah, that was disgusting and yeah, that was wrong. And, praise God, I am a new creation and the old has gone, and behold all things have been made new.

I'm living forgiven right now. See, the devil will lie to you about all of these. When I tell you it's complete sufficiency on the authority of God's word, here's what he'll tell you, "No, there's things Pastor Jeff doesn't know about. He's not smart enough. Listen to this person over here that adds things to Jesus." When I tell you about Christlike identity, he'll say, "No, no, no, not you because look at your life and look at how you don't measure up and at how you're doing, and you don't really have Christlike identity

like other Christians do." And when I tell you that you're comprehensively forgiven, he'll say, "Well, you're forgiven. I mean, God's going to forgive you, but he's so disappointed in you, so upset with you. You need to say penance a lot more and do some things to get."

No, no, no. You have everything you need in Christ, and if you've trusted him, you have his identity and you are comprehensively forgiven right now. And if you own that, it leads to number four that Paul is telling us, which may be the best news of all. And, that is that the Lordship of Jesus Christ establishes the benefit of current victory. Jesus canceled out your debt. It's done. It's already been paid for. There's nothing you can do to pay for it. And what did it say in verse 15? When he had disarmed the rulers and authorities, because we already found out that he did that, he made a public display of them having triumphed over them through him. So, what happened on the cross? He disarmed all the rulers. Well, who are the rulers? Rulers in Heaven and on earth, thrones, dominions, rulers and authorities, all things that were created by him and through him, they're disarmed.

Now, let's just talk about Satan for just a minute. About 60% of Americans I read in a study ... I'm not talking about just church people. I'm talking about Americans in general ... do not believe in a real being Satan. They believe maybe he's a personification of evil and there's evil in the world. Satan is a real created being. God created him. And so most you know about Satan. He's not nearly as powerful as he tells you that he is. God is all authoritative, and then Satan's a created being. He has some power, but it's under the scope and sovereignty of God as to how he can even

use it. God is all places at all times. God is all wisdom. God is all knowledge. Satan is not. He doesn't have all wisdom. He can't be in the same place at all times. He can only be in one place because he is not God.

Which, means this. Yes, he has legions of demons, fallen angels that go after him. But the reality, because I'll hear people say this, "Satan's tempting me. Satan's doing this." The reality of that is there's probably none of us in this room that have ever been personally tempted by Satan. None of us probably rank high enough on Satan's chart for him to know us by name and do all that. But, there are demons and those who are under him in rank that have studied your life, that know you, that know everything about you, that tempt you in certain ways. But it's not Satan himself. He can only be in one place at one time. I don't know if Satan's ever tempted me, but I've been tempted by him and his demons just like all of you have.

So, check out this. Here's what happened at the cross. What we see with our earthly eyes when we read through the Gospels, we see a man, Jesus Christ, the God-man of the universe who was stripped naked, who was pinned to a cross with nails, who hung there and bled out to death until he breathed his last. And, to the world looking on, it looked like a shameful thing, this Jewish carpenter that just died on a cross in front of just a few people outside of the city gate in Jerusalem. But let me tell you what was happening. When that was going on and Jesus Christ was taking all of the Father's wrath, here's what was going on spiritually. He was disarming all of the rulers, all of the authorities, he was taking away all the power that any of the evil one

would ever have against you and whoever else believed in his name.

And, he was making a public display of them. What looked shameful for Jesus was really shameful for the demons. Let me try to spell this out for you. I was trying to think of a passage. What can I show? And, God led me to Acts 19. If you remember Acts 19, Paul was in Ephesus. He was doing all sorts of incredible miracles, and much like when God does those things where the Holy Spirit is doing something, there's always counterfeits of it. And so, there were Jewish exorcists that were trying to perform miracles in the name of Jesus, because they saw Paul perform miracles in the name Jesus. This was at a time where they were grabbing hankies and aprons and taking them out, and just because they would touch the Apostle Paul, other people were getting healed.

They're like, "We need to get in on some of this." And so, there was a certain priest named Sceva, a Jewish priest. He had seven sons, and they decided they were going to toy with the spiritual world and try to cast demons out and do all these things like they saw Paul doing. And in Acts 19:15, as these priests were doing this, the evil spirit spoke up out of the man they were trying to cast the demon out of, and here's what he said. The evil spirit answered these men and said to them, "I recognize Jesus and I know about Paul, but who are you?" In other words, I know Jesus. He's the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. I know Paul. His identify is totally rooted in Jesus. Who the heck are you?

In other words, I know that I have to submit to the power and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. I know I have to submit to those who are identified with the power

and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, but I also know I don't have to submit to those who don't know them. Who are you? They didn't really have an answer, so check out verse 16. And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them ... There's seven of them ... leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. Now, can you imagine this? Do demons have power? Yes. This demon had enough power to take seven full grown men, strip them naked, subdue them until all these guys were running out, fleeing like, "Oh my gosh, this demon's so powerful."

That's what happened when non-believers tried to mess with the authority of Jesus Christ without having that authority. Here's what happened on the cross. Jesus Christ made every single demon in the world flee just like that. He didn't put down seven demons. He put them all down. He disarmed them. There is not authority Satan has over your life. The reason you feel he might have is because he's a liar, and he will tell you he has authority over your life. The only way you can give him authority over your life is if you relinquish authority to him. He has no authority in your life. He can't have authority in your life unless you, as a believer say, "I'm going to believe the lie and I want to live out the lie." And when you do, you can put yourself into bondage under his leadership, but you don't need to.

And if you are under his bondage, you don't need to stay there. Let me make it crystal clear. For some of you who are believers, you're young, you're dating, you want to find the right spouse, but you've listened to the lie of the enemy that says this. There's no virgins out there. You're not going to meet somebody who's sexually pure.

You're not going to meet the right person. You need to play the field. And so, you've listened to the lie. You gave Satan the authority to do that. You've now played the field. Now you're in bondage because now he's lying to you and he is telling you this, "You're used goods. You're no good. You'll never meet somebody good. You'll never meet somebody pure. There's no good Christian gal for you. No good Christian man for you. Who would ever put up with someone like that?"

You're in bondage, and so when he lies to you like that, then he tries to keep kicking you down. But you don't have to stay there. You just come right back to the cross and say, "Nope, that's not who I am. And, I did sin and I was wrong, but I know I'm completely complete in Christ and I am holy, and I'm righteous, and I'm good, and Jesus, from this moment on, I want to do it your way." And, you can kick him to the curb. Not because you fight him, not because you bind him and cast him out and do all these different funky things, but because you believe the truth of the Gospel. You have current victory in Christ. Why is this important? Because for most believers, they think this. There's future victory. I know when I get to Heaven, it's all going to work out. I'm this ...

Here's what present victory is. I presently right now am more than a conqueror in Jesus. And here's the reality, God wants you to live from a position of victory, not for victory. If I'm living to fight the devil so I can be free, it's different than I'm living free because I already have victory over the devil. Guys, I'm telling you. If you struggle with drinking or sexuality or swearing or your identity when you look in the mirror and you

feel like you're lousy and you're no good, or there's besetting sins that come, you can try to practice changing them for the rest of your life and it won't work. You say, "Well, Pastor Jeff, how do you know?" It hasn't worked yet, has it? Or, you can live under the freedom of Christ in his shed blood and in your new identity and in your complete sufficiency and your comprehensive forgiveness, in your current victory saying, "I am free in him and I look to the Lamb and he's the one who takes my sins away."

That's who I am in Christ. That's a whole different way of living. 1 John 3:8 tells us one of the reasons why Jesus came. He came to destroy the works of the devil. They've been destroyed. And one day he will ultimately throw him into the lake of fire. I can't wait for that day. If I never get Super Bowl tickets again, if I never get to go see a championship game, I am yearning for the day more than any other thing to see when God, the Father and his son and the Holy Spirit cast him into the lake of fire. And at that day, we will look upon him and be like, "That was it? That was the one?" There'll be the biggest cheer you've ever heard as he gets thrown into the lake of fire for all eternity. Amen?

I can't wait.

I can't wait, either. We need to live with the victory that we have in him. Church, if you've trusted in Christ, you have everything you need. Church, if you've trusted in Christ, you have a new identity. You're connected to Christ with everything you need. Church, if you've trusted in Christ, all your sins, past, present and future, big ones, small ones, middle ones, they're all forgiven. Church, if you believe in Christ, you already have the victory. I've said it before, I'm a sports fan. I like watching games.

When I'm watching one of my teams play in the middle of a game and I don't know the outcome because I'm watching it live, I'm sweating, I'm pacing, I'm moving, I'm wringing my hands. It's different to watch it three weeks after the game's over when I already know my team's won.

We won the state championship by three points my senior year in high school. With four seconds to go, my friend blocked a field goal. We won 29 to 26. I remember at the time where I was on the 38 yard line, kneeling down, even as a nonbeliever, praying that God would give us a victory. I was sweating. I was nervous. I've seen that play hundreds of times since then. He blocks it every time. We've won every single time I watched. You see what I'm trying to say? Christians, when you're under the Lordship of Christ, you win every single time. You're completely forgiven, completely sufficient and your identity is totally in Jesus.

I want to call the worship team up at this point, and as they come up, I just want to pray for us because if you're here today and you've never trusted in Jesus Christ, or you say, "I've never really heard stuff like this before," here's what you're hearing. You're hearing the Gospel. The good news of salvation is not that you get saved and do good things. The good news of salvation is Christ in you. The hope of glory that God through his son wants to come and establish his life in and through you and forgive you, and give you everything you need, and all that you're looking for is in him.

And then church, it's this. What did the Holy Spirit show you this morning that you agree with, but maybe as you agree with, you're not seeing lived out in your life? That

you don't live from a position of victory, that you don't think is just in Jesus alone, that maybe you're not trusting Jesus enough in his identity to do his work. Maybe you think there's sins that aren't forgiven and what is it you need to own today? Because by owning them and looking to the Lamb, that's where you find life and find life in his name. Amen?

Would you stand with me as we pray? Lord Jesus, we come before you right now because we believe that you're alive and active. And, if you're here today and you've never trusted Jesus, here's how you can pray. Lord Jesus, I'm done with religion and I'm done with performance and I'm here today because I recognize I'm a sinner and I'm in need of your grace. I believe you died on the cross and were buried and that you rose from the dead. I believe you're alive, and right now I confess with my mouth for you to be my personal Lord and savior. I'm giving you all my sin, and I want to receive all your righteousness.

Lord, there's many of us here who believe that truth, but Lord, through your spirit today you showed us something about an aspect of the Gospel that you wanted us to own in a fresh new way. Lord, do a work in our lives, help us own who you are and help us look to you, the one who has forgiven us completely, and our identity rests totally in you. In Jesus name, amen.