

7th Sunday after Pentecost
July 24, 2022
“Nailed it!” (Colossians 2:13-15)
By Rev. Ed Weber

“Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, today’s text for this 6th Sunday after Pentecost is from our Epistle reading Colossians 1:19.

“And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.”

Here ends our text.

Nailed it! Often we hear a sports announcer yell out that phrase when an athlete accomplishes an amazing feat...like when a golfer sinks a long put, when a basketball player makes a winning 3 point basket with a second left to play, or when a kicker makes a game winning field goal. Or we hear a commentator say these words when a politician makes an excellent speech, or a talent act has an incredible audition on America’s Got Talent. Sometimes one of the judges will then hit the golden buzzer and golden confetti will fall from the ceiling.

At the end of Good Friday, there was no golden buzzer and no confetti – only tears, darkness, and a lifeless body hanging on the cross. To all who witnessed Jesus’ death, He had failed. His enemies were glad, and Jesus’ followers mourned. It seemed the end. But He who was nailed to the cross actually... nailed it!

Jesus nailed it! It was total victory – for Jesus and for us! He did what no other man could do. He nailed the requirements of the law to the cross and there they stayed. Let’s spend some time this morning now seeing how great a comfort this is!

Last week in chapter one, we heard Paul tell us these words:

“For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”

And now in chapter two, God tells us how exactly this peace through Jesus’ blood was made – by the nailing of the law to the cross. Christ rose. The law didn’t.

I. Sinful man tries to resurrect the law that was nailed to the cross

People want to resurrect the law in many different forms - legalism, pietism, asceticism (become a monk and deny yourself) Gnosticism, charismatics, buddists... a divine spark in all people is the common false theme that just needs enlightenment, man’s efforts to achieve perfection. Don’t touch, don’t taste, do this, don’t do that to reincarnate yourself. None of these manmade attempts work to bring a person into heaven.

Paul’s response:

“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.”

True Lutheran teaching is not looking for the next new thing. We’re not trying to “lean” into anything. Oh, that’s such a popular word with all the evangelicals. No we root ourselves in the solid foundation of Christ and walk in Him!

Paul continues in our epistle reading:

“8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.”

Not according to Christ. Everything false is “other” than Christ which the world strives after and seeks to entice Christians to follow.

“Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations— 21 “Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,” 22 which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men? 23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.”

Have you received your salvation by not touching, not tasting, not eating meat on Fridays, not working on Saturdays, not drinking wine on Sundays? Oh the list of do's and don'ts is as endless as man's imagination to create additional requirements!

If Good Friday was the end, then the law wasn't nailed to the cross. If there was no resurrection, if Christ didn't rise from the dead, then have at! Invent your own code of living and requirements for nirvana. If Christ didn't rise from the dead, then we are the most pitiable of all men. We would still be as dead and as hopeless as we were before knowing Christ.

“And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh...” Paul says. That's our helpless state. That doesn't change if Christ didn't rise.

II. Christ is risen and raises up believers by the Gospel not the law

But did not Christ rise from the dead? Did He not fulfill the law? Did He not put an end to the requirements of the law?

“In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.”

We have everything in Christ! We have all that is of eternal value – in Christ! You were raised. It's accomplished. Yes! You are raised right now in Jesus!

As we heard last week, God willed that you have everything though you are Gentiles. God made it happen. He gave you faith in Christ through your baptism!

“To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”
(Colossians 1:27)

Jesus' work on the cross makes you complete!

9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.”

Baptism is the putting off, the casting away of all sins of the flesh, the burying of them, and then being raised to new life with Christ! God works genuine

repentance and faith. God puts off your sins and puts on Christ in baptism. God puts on you Christ's righteousness and raises you a new perfect child of God! Yes perfect, faultless! Two things happen in your baptism – a burial and a resurrection, a putting off sin and a putting on of Christ's righteousness. The terrors of sin causing contrition is replaced with the absolute consolation of the Gospel.

Oh, that is so hard for us to accept for we see our sinful nature daily. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession says this:

“'You have come to fullness of life in him.' It is as though he (Paul) were saying, 'Though you are still far away from the perfection of the law, still the remnant of your sin does not condemn you, because for Christ's sake we have a firm and sure reconciliation through faith, though sin still stick to your flesh.'”

The sinful flesh that we see does not condemn us. For your sins have already been buried. With absolute certainty Paul says to you...two things. You were once dead, but now are alive!

“And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,

Do you see the word “some” here? Are there any sins which Jesus has not forgiven? NO! He has forgiven ALL your trespasses!

14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”

Together! Christ rose first! And He has made you alive with Him through faith in Him. How? He wiped out what condemned you! He wiped all the requirements of the law ...because He fulfilled the law for you, in your stead! It's done! Once and for all! Why would you want to go and add on additional manmade requirements that God has not mandated? There is no law to accuse you because Christ was accused. He paid the penalty and left the law nailed on the cross.

III. Live always in Christ's victory – freed from the law!
He nailed it! Yes, He nailed it there with nails that cannot be pulled out. (example) Christianity, the religion that there is life in Christ alone, is the only true religion because it is the religion of “done it”. It's done and finished by Christ. All other religions say that what Christ did is not enough. They are “do it” religions.

And Paul says, “Don’t be deceived!”

Instead, live in victory! Christ’s victory! For He assailed the devil and won. That’s what Paul says in the very next verse of our epistle.

“having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.”

Public spectacle. Where? In hell! On Holy Saturday, before Jesus rose from the dead, He descended into hell and showed His victory over the devil and all demons that He had disarmed. He condemned them and all who rejected Him, who have died in unbelief and are in hell.

But to all who have received Christ through faith, God has nailed it for you! He nailed it for you personally! Jesus disarmed the devil so that he cannot accuse you. You are acquitted and are freed to serve God all the days of your life.

“16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. 18 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.”

The substance is Christ – the Gospel! Not the law!

What you’ve been given is not a shadow, or a cheap substitute of humility or piety. It is the Gospel! Cherish it with all your heart! It’s the real substance – Christ Himself. What the Holy Spirit has given you by the hearing of His Word is saving faith, forgiveness of all your sins. He has sealed your eternal inheritance to you in your baptism. Christ is in you, the hope of glory. He is your Victor. He is your Head, in whom you and all other believers are nourished through Word and Sacrament and grow with the increase that is from God. God nailed it indeed! He nailed it for you! Amen.

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your heart and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)