



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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June 10, 2012

Pentecost 2

Sermon Text: [Colossians 2:13-17](#)

Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [1 Samuel 21:1-6](#)

Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 122](#)

Second Lesson: [Colossians 2:13-17](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Mark 2:23-28](#)

God Made You Alive

He cancelled the code

Live in his reality

Grace, mercy and peace are yours from God our Father through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Did you ever have a really bad head cold? It kind of just knocks you off your feet and you don't feel like doing anything and don't want to do anything. You're just not yourself. You can't think straight. Before you know it, you've told your kids they did a good job when they didn't even start doing what you told them to do. You're just completely out of it. Maybe some of it is because you take some of that cold medicine that makes you a little loopy to begin with. Head colds can be nasty, but they're just head colds.

Last week when we saw Jesus talk to Nicodemus and this week, as we consider these words from Paul's letter to the Colossians, there's one truth that I think the good Lord is trying to beat into our heads. Our sins are not a head cold. Both times we are told that we need to be born again. We need to be made alive because even though we are born physically, we are dead spiritually. There are times when we want to make our sin out to be not so bad. "It's certainly not as bad as your sins." That's what the sinful nature inside of each one of us wants to think. But our Lord is reminding us of this incredible truth that we need to know and when we appreciate it truly and deeply with the grace of God, it just becomes such a wonderful blessing in our lives.

We were dead. Spiritually dead. Not spiritually impaired. Not spiritually sick. Not spiritually hampered. Not spiritually weakened. Spiritually dead. That's you. That's me. That's all of us when we are born into this world. That's Chase (baby that was baptized this morning) when he was born into this world. That's why it's so wonderful that our God is the one who does all the work. God made us alive. God gives us the gift of faith. God does all the work. Since he is the one that does all the work, it doesn't rely on us at any point in time. He can work that faith in the heart of a child that is that small. We seem to forget how small little ones are. That's why it's so cool to see our Lord work like that.

God made us alive. He did it because our baptism connects us to Christ. As we are told in our text, when we were dead in our sins, God made us alive with Christ. It has to do with Jesus and who he is and what he did for us. Jesus did what God demands of

us. God demands that we be holy or be perfect as our Lord or as our Father is holy or perfect. He doesn't say do your best, try hard. He says be perfect. You and I can't do it. So Christ came and he lived perfectly in our place, never once sinning. It's unfathomable to me. Never once sinning! Never once despising God's Word. Never once misusing his name. Never once not honoring his parents. Never once getting angry or saying things in anger that were sinful. Never having sinful anger. Never once looking at someone with lust. Never once having a sinful desire for something that belonged to someone else.

You and I would want to rank our sins. You and I would want to say some of our sins are bad and someone else's sins are even worse, but God tells us any one of these things, anyone who doesn't fail to keep the whole Law is guilty of breaking it all. That's why we are dead. He tells us when God made us alive by keeping it for us, it's so important to us because Christ forgave all our sins, *having cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us*. This phrase that is used here is kind of a business term. The written code that stood against us... it's a phrase that would be used for a debt or writing out in their own hand a kind of an IOU. This is the debt I owe you and I acknowledge it by writing out with my own hand. Now it's this business document. I owe you this. God here is telling us that's what the Law is. When you and I look at the Law, what God demands of us when we are born into this world, it's our IOU to God. In order to be right with God, we have to do it all. You and I don't. You and I can't. That's why it's so important that Christ came and was perfect in our place and that Christ came to the cross and took all of our sins and took every last one of our sins away.

We who were dead have been made alive by what Jesus did. But always clearly understand exactly what dead means. It means you and I have nothing we can offer to God. Unless God works in us first, there's nothing we can give to him. There's nothing we can do to make him love us. We have a head knowledge of that truth, but in our hearts it doesn't always live. There are times when we want to say "Yeah, I know I'm a sinner, but at least I haven't done this, this or this." Or "I'm a sinner but I'm not as bad as that person or this person." God is telling us that dead is dead. Don't make excuses for sin. Don't rank your sin. Just take all of your sins to the cross of Christ because there you will find forgiveness. That's the truth of what our God has said to us.

When God tells us that he made us alive by cancelling the written code that stood against us, he took all of its demands away because they were met in Christ, and he says "You are now forgiven". Now he says to live in that forgiveness. Live in a way that reflects this new reality that you live in. The new reality is that some of what God had demanded of his Old Testament people in the Ceremonial Law no longer applies to you.

God said "Don't let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink." In the Old Testament Ceremonial Law, there were clean and unclean foods, clean and unclean things they could eat and drink. They couldn't have a hog roast. You and I can because Christ fulfilled the Law. That doesn't apply to us anymore.

He also says "Let no one judge you in regard to a religious festival, a new Moon celebration or a Sabbath day." He says all these things, including a Sabbath day, were a shadow of the things to come, but the reality is in Christ. I think we have a head knowledge that we are not obligated by the Sabbath day, but we are screwed up on what the Sabbath day really is at times, aren't we? Our country has a lot of Sabbath laws in various places, don't they? What day of the week do they deal with? Do you know? Are you still listening? (Yes.) Thank you. All our Sabbath laws deal with Sundays, right? We are so screwed up on that. The Sabbath isn't Sunday. The Sabbath was Saturday. When God said remember the Sabbath day, the day of rest was Saturday. Even as Christians who know that, we still get this screwed up in our heads, don't we?

A couple of weeks ago I was in Michigan. I saw a couple of my aunts, my mom's older sisters, the kind that love to come in and kind of pet you and kiss you on the cheek with all that lipstick they have on and all that kind of stuff. They do all those things to you that kind of can get a little annoying and make you a little squeamish. Just ask my kids. But I love them to pieces and it's always fun to sit and talk with them because they are funny. I have one aunt that just loves to give people grief. She loves to just pick on people and tell jokes and do these different things. She absolutely hates it when you give it back to her. She just hates it. So I really enjoy doing that.

She was telling me a joke that had to do with the Sabbath day. It was a cute joke. I don't remember it. I don't remember that kind of stuff all that well. It said something about the Sabbath day. She got done with her joke and I said, "Aunt Jean, the Sabbath isn't Sunday. It's Saturday." "Well no, it's Sunday for us. As Christians, it's Sunday for us." I said, "No it's not. It's Saturday. It's always been Saturday and always will be Saturday. The Seventh day was the day of rest." Then she was all flustered and upset with me because that really threw off her joke.

She's a fine Christian woman, but we get screwed up on that. We get screwed up with a lot of things because we go by our experience more than we go by what is in Scripture. This is one of our weaknesses as Christians today. Part of it is because we don't understand the true Sabbath rest that God is talking about here.

The day of rest in the Old Testament is Saturday. They weren't to do any work on it. The reality that God was trying to drive home to them was "You have to trust me. Trust me to take care of you. You think you have to work. You think you have to do this but take this day off and rest. It will be a blessing to you. It will be a way for you to express your trust that I will take care of you. On that day, also remember that I'll take care of your greatest needs. I'll send the Savior. I'll send the One who will be the Great Prophet, the One who will be the Suffering Servant. I will send the One who will open heaven to you by taking away your sins."

As Paul told the Colossians and the Holy Spirit tells us through Paul, those Ceremonial Laws like that, including the Sabbath, were a shadow. They were pointing ahead to a reality that was coming. If you see a shadow coming down the hallway because the

light is behind someone, you know someone is coming. But when the person gets there, you don't sit and talk to their shadow and look at the floor. If you do, people will think you're nuts. Instead you look the person in the face.

We look at Jesus, who has provided Sabbath rest for us, in the face. Do you remember what Jesus said at one point? He said "Come unto me all you who are weary and take my yoke upon you for my yoke is easy and my burden is light and you will find rest for your souls." Sabbath rest in the Old Testament pointed ahead to the Sabbath rest for our souls that is the forgiveness that Jesus provided for us. So now instead of taking a day off where we don't do any work, we are free to gather together at any time. We are free to work on a Saturday or work on a Sunday.

Now we honor God by getting closer to him and finding rest for our souls in his Gospel. We do that by coming together with other Christians. Lord willing we can do that every week because we can come together, unite our voices in praise and prayer, and say how great our God is and we can put some work and some effort into it and be blessed greatly by God. But I still think sometimes we screw this up. This is how we are. We think "Hey, I went. I put in my time for God. God, that's enough. You should not ask me to do anymore. You shouldn't ask me to open my Bible during the week. You shouldn't expect me to study with other Christians. You shouldn't expect me to have a family devotion because I put in my 45 minutes to an hour Lord. That should be enough for you." We're missing the point, aren't we? The Sabbath Law, or any of the laws that God has given us are not about us doing something for God. God intends it to be a blessing for us. The more time we spend with God in his Gospel, the more we will be blessed.

Think about what the means for you in worship. Sometimes I hear from people, "Pastor, you have to tell us something new. I just don't want to hear John 3:16 every week. I just don't want to hear that Jesus took away our sins every week." Get over yourself. That's what you need. Don't just come to worship and expect to sit back and be entertained. Put some work into it yourself. God gave you some gray matter. Use it. Think about these lessons as we read them. Apply them to your life. Think about the hymns as we sing them and how they apply to your life. Do some of the work yourself. God speaks to you so listen, hear and apply, and you'll grow and be blessed greatly by God. Don't just think you know it all.

People sin against the Third Commandment by despising the Word and never hearing it. They also sin against this Commandment by thinking "I know all that. Tell me something new. I'm really smart. You have to come up with something better than that to keep my attention." Get over yourself. Both those ways are sins against this Commandment.

We are dead sinners who have been made alive by Christ. If that doesn't thrill you anymore, you've got a problem. Pinch yourself. You're probably already dead physically. So put some work into it. Find rest, not just as you worship with other Christians. Find it on your own. Pick up the Bible. Read through it. Read through the

rest of Colossians today. Read the whole thing. It isn't that long. You can do it. Do it during a commercial during the NASCAR race. Do it some other time during the day. Find some time. But find that rest.

After you apply God's Word to your life and you see how much you've failed him, find that rest when you come to his altar and receive his very body and blood for the forgiveness of your sins. Find that rest as you see a baptism and as you go back to your own baptism and are reminded that the sign of the cross that was made over you lives over you. You are clothed with Christ and you stand forgiven because he has made you his own.

This is some really neat stuff that we get to do. We don't do it so then God is more God. God is perfect whether or not you or I do it. God is divine whether or not you or I do this. God did not give us these commands so that somehow we do something to make him better or he gets something out of it. He gave us these commands because he knows that we'll get something out of it. We'll be blessed. His love for us is just that immense that his greatest desire is that you and I be blessed by the Gospel of forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ. Amen.