

The ABC's of Christ's Redemption

by Bayless Conley

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Hello to everyone that's watching us online, or in any other way, at any other time; hello to you. Are you ready for the Word? Are you sure? All right. Last week we got into Colossians 2. We're on a series on the book of Colossians right now. I did verses 1 through 11. Some of the verses we hurried through just because of time. And we determined then, and we let you know that we're going to come back and spend a little more time on some of those verses, which we're about to do.

If you have your Bible, Colossians chapter 2, and the title of the message is "The ABCs of Christ's Redemption." "The ABCs of Christ's Redemption." Pretty simple stuff we're going to be looking at today, but it can change your life.

Now, let's pray, and get into the Word. Heavenly Father, we settle our hearts down before You and we give You our undivided attention. Father, to the best of our ability, each and every one of us, we marshal all of our resources, spirit, soul, and body, and we lean out toward heaven. Speak to us. Cause these eyes of ours to see, these hearts of ours to comprehend. Father, we ask it with a view to put it into practice. The things that we learn, we're not just going to admire them, but we're going to do them. We know it's one that does the Word that is blessed in his or her deeds. Thank You for the Holy Spirit, who is present here to lead and guide us into all of the truth. Lord, we just want to say we love You. Amen.

The ABCs of Christ Redemption. A stands for all things new. Can we say that together?
All things new. Colossians 2:11,

¹¹ When you came to Christ, you were "circumcised," but not by a physical procedure. Christ performed a spiritual circumcision—the cutting away of your sinful nature.

Now, physical circumcision cuts away and removes part of the flesh. But Jesus, when we put our trust in Him, took the sword of the Spirit and cut away the entirety of our sinful nature that is in our spirits. Look with me in 2 Corinthians 5:17, and I'm sure most of you have heard this. It says,

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

"Old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." Well, obviously, that "all things new" is not in our bodies. I still have the same body I had before I got saved. I have an older version now. I had freckles before I gave my life to Jesus. I had freckles after I gave my life to Jesus.

"All things new," not talking about my mind, that wasn't changed. What changed was my spirit. You are a spirit being. You have a soul. You live in a physical body. Your soul is comprised of your mind, your will, and your emotions. But the part of you that was saved when you accepted

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Christ was your spirit. All things became new. God cut away the sin nature from your spirit, the real you. Spirit saved. Your soul, mind, will, and emotions they're in the process of being saved.

The book of James, written to believers, said, "Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your soul." Then our bodies, well, one day we're going to get a new body, but in the meantime, we have this treasure in earthen vessels. Listen to what Jesus said. He's talking to Nicodemus one night. Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews. In John 3:6, Jesus said,

⁶ "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Now notice "that which is born of the Spirit, capital S, is spirit, little s"—the translators got that right—"That which is born of the Holy Spirit" is your human spirit, that eternal part of you. He went on. Jesus said, John 3:7-8

⁷ "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' ⁸ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

In other words, there's an element of mystery with this new birth and this inward, all things becoming new. The wind is invisible. I don't know where it's coming from. I can't see it. I don't know where it's going, but I can sure see its effects. I can see the limbs on the trees bowing before the wind. I can see the leaves being blown along. I see the effect of it, but it's invisible to my eye. Well, you know what? When the Holy Spirit recreated my spirit, it's invisible. You can't see that with your physical eye. There's an element of mystery to it. However, you can see the results.

My friends, when I gave my life to Jesus, some of them said, "Look, it looks like Bayless, the voice sounds like Bayless, but there's somebody else living in his body. He's not getting high with us anymore. He's not sleeping with his girlfriend anymore. He doesn't talk the way he used to talk. Something has changed." All right, they couldn't see it physically. There was a bit of a mystery there, but they certainly saw the impact that it had when my spirit was born again through the Holy Spirit.

Someone might say, "Okay, if all things passed away and all things have become new, if I'm a new person on the inside, if literally my spirit has been born again, then why do I sometimes still want to do bad things?" Why do I sometimes struggle with temptations? Paul wrote about that. In the book of Romans, he said, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man—spirit. The person that's been born again. My spirit wants to obey God. The real me on the inside, I want to line up with the will of God. I want to be pleasing to God." He said, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." It went on and said, "But I see another law in my members or in my body that's constantly wanting to pull me into sin."

You see, my spirit has been born again, but I still have the sin nature in my flesh. I have a new body laid up to my account, but the truth is that there is still a principle of sin in my flesh. Galatians 5 outlines the same struggle. Again, one day we'll have a new body, but in the meantime, we have this treasure in earthen vessels that still have the principle of sin working in them. Listen to these words of Paul in Ephesians 4:24. He said,

²⁴ And that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

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The new man, your spirit, the real you on the inside, has been created, born again, made new in righteousness, in true holiness. There's nothing wrong with my spirit. I have been given the righteousness of Christ. I have been touched by heaven's holiness. Yet he said, "Put it on." In other words, it's like; I put this coat on. Wear it outwardly. Get what God put on the inside to the outside. Look, start living it out.

This thing that's inside of you, this new man, this new woman on the inside that's created by God, righteous and holy and good, put it on. Work it out into your speech. Work it out into your attitudes; work it out into your behavior. Paul gives us a great clue on how we can start doing that. In the previous verse, Ephesians 4:23, he said,

²³ And be renewed in the spirit of your mind.

What we do with our minds will determine whether our spirits, our new nature will dominate or whether our flesh will dominate our lives. It's like you've got your spirit born again, wants to please God, wants to serve God. Your flesh, it just wants to do naughty things. Caught in between is your mind. What you do with your mind will determine which way you swing, with the flesh, or with your born-again nature. Romans 12:1–2. You probably know these verses. He said in verse 1,

¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies.

(Who is the you? The spirit person on the inside, the real you.)

You present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

(How do I do that? In the next verse, he tells you),

² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove (experience) what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

So, he said all right, don't be conformed to this world. The word "conform," the Greek word, literally means to be squeezed into a mold by an outside pressure. The world is continually putting pressure on everyone through every means it can to fit in, to accept its values, its views, the acceptable norms of modern culture. There's constant pressure. The zeitgeist of a godless society that threatens to punish you if you do not fit in, that pressure is always there.

But he said, "Listen, don't be conformed to the views and the values and the spirit of the age." He said, "But be transformed." The word "conform," the Greek word, molded by an outside pressure. The word *transformed* literally means to "let what's on the inside come to the outside." It's the Greek word *Metamorphoo*. Does that sound familiar? We get our English word metamorphosis from it. Let what's on the inside come to the outside.

All right. How do I do that? I renew my mind with God's Word. I change my thinking. I let His Word become the final authority in my life. Not what the world says. Not what the world thinks. Not what the zeitgeist of the age is, but His Word.

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One day, one of the kids came home, when they were small, with a shoe box from school. In the shoebox was a bunch of worms. He said, "Dad, these are silkworms. The teacher gave them to me, and we're going to feed them, and they're going to change." I said, "What do we feed them? Lettuce?" He said, "No." I said, "What do we feed them?" He said, "Well, the only thing that silkworms eat are mulberry leaves. That's all." I said, "We don't have a mulberry tree in our yard." He said, "Well, dad, we have to get mulberry leaves."

So, we scoured the neighborhood, found a neighbor with a big mulberry tree, and we borrowed some of their mulberry leaves. We brought them, and threw them in that shoebox. You wouldn't believe it; those silkworms went to town. They gorged themselves, and they became even uglier. In fact, just put a picture up. This is what a silkworm looks like. They're not a real pretty worm. And when they get filled with mulberry leaves, they become this almost translucent, green, pudgy, and just even uglier.

Then they spun these silk cocoons, and it was just quiet. But it wasn't too long; something amazing came out. These butterfly-like creatures, these silkworm moths, look and see what came out. Put a picture up there if you would. I couldn't believe my eyes! That ugly worm turned to that. We got a couple of other pictures. There's different kinds of silkworms. Look what they turn into. They're amazing! I literally was stunned. I think we might have one more picture. You can put it up. Just amazing!

But the world will tell you, "No, look, you're a worm. You act like a worm. You stay a worm. You're a worm, just like the rest of us." I say, "No. Christ has put something better inside of me. I am going to feed on the mulberry leaves of God's Word, and I am going to be transformed. What He put on the inside is going to come to the outside because I renew my mind with His Word. My mind and my spirit are going to agree, and they are going to put my body into subjection." And yes, certainly, there's going to be struggles sometimes. Even the great apostle Paul, 1 Corinthians 9:27, said, "Hey,

²⁷ I discipline my body and bring it into subjection.

Meaning, he was saying, my body doesn't always want to go along with the program. I like the King James Version. He said I keep under my body, or I put my body under. When we were kids, if we were in a public pool or at somebody's house that had a pool, they used to have these little Styrofoam paddle boards. You'd hang on to them and kick your legs, and we used to take them, and we'd push them down under the water and stand on them. Those little boards were just wanting to jump out all the time. Whoever could stand on that thing the longest, won.

That's like your flesh. You're keeping it under; it's wanting to pop out and do something wrong. It's wanting to say something bad. It's wanting to watch something naughty. I'm keeping it under. How do I do that? How do I keep it under? I renew my mind with God's Word. I feed my heart with God's Word. My life and actions, and speech are going to go in line with His recreated nature on the inside.

Somebody says, "Are you ever going to mess up?" Yes, but the more we mature in Christ, those become fewer and farther in between. It's called maturation. It's called growing in spiritual maturity. It's called growing in Christ's likeness. It does change everything about us when we begin to renew our mind. But friend, listen to me, the real you, the spirit you, if you've been born again, you have been created in righteousness and true holiness. All right, we come to the second letter B. It stands for baptism. Colossians 2:12,

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¹² For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.

Did you notice “baptism” in verse 12 came after “being made new” in verse 11? If you haven’t been made new first, baptism will do you no good; if you haven’t been made a new creation in Christ first. Friend, here’s how it works. You go into the water a dry sinner, and you come out a wet sinner, unchanged. Baptism does not change you, doesn’t save you. It’s a declaration of what Christ has already done.

As a new Christian, I was out of state, standing in a hotel, and I thought, “Well, maybe there’s a church that’s got a midweek service.” I got a paper out, and I found an ad. It said, “Pentecostal coming soon. Jesus is coming soon, church.” I thought, “Great, I go to a little Pentecostal church back home.” I got on the phone. I called them and said, “Look, I’m at such and such hotel. How do I find you guys? It says here you have a midweek service.”

They said, “We do, but you don’t need to get a taxi. We’ll pick you up in the church bus.” I said, “Really?” They said, “Yes, we’ll be there.” I said, “Okay.” We determined a time, and sure enough, they came in the church bus, and it was the pastor himself who came to pick me up. I couldn’t believe it—the pastor and his wife and their son. I said, “Thanks, guys.” We get to the church, and no one was there. I was the only one. Then the pastor’s wife and his son disappeared, and it was me. He preached to me for the next hour.

I was the only one in there. He thundered. The guy, he preached hard, but his whole message was about water baptism, and his whole deal was if you are not water baptized according to their formula, you’re going to hell. That if the guy baptizing you didn’t say the words according to their formula, you were lost eternally. He preached in his message, he said, “Roberts may be helping a lot of people, but he’s going straight to hell.” He said this.

He said, “Billy Graham may be a good preacher, but he’s going to split the gates of hell wide open because he’s not baptized according to our formula.” I’m thinking, “I’ve been baptized in water, but I don’t remember what the guy said.” In fact, I think I was underwater. I didn’t even hear him. You know it’s just stupid. It’s ignorance gone to seed. Baptism will do you no good if you haven’t been changed first.

It’s a declaration of what Jesus has already done for you. My old life is dead and buried. Now I’m raised to a new life with Him, and I’m identifying with Christ. That’s one reason we don’t do infant baptism because an infant can’t make a declaration of what Christ has done for them. Now, we do formally dedicate children, and we lay hands on them and bless them. Jesus did that and so we do that as well. We come to the next letter in the alphabet. It’s C. It stands for Christ, our identity. Christ, our identity. Colossians 2, again, verse 12, but I want to read verse 13. with it. It says,

¹² For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead. ¹³ You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins.

Now, did you notice in those two verses, “with Christ”, “with Christ”, “with Him?” There’s an identification there. In baptism, we identify with Him, but the only reason that has any value is

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because He first identified with us. My friend, in the mind of God, when Jesus died on the cross, you died with Him. In the mind of God, when Christ was buried, you were buried with Him. In the mind of God, when Jesus was raised from the dead, you were raised with Him because He did what He did as your representative. He did it as your substitute, in your place.

In the Old Testament, the Old Testament high priest would go into the tabernacle. There was a section where the ark of the covenant was and where God's presence dwelt under the Old Testament. The high priest was the only one allowed to go in there, only one time a year. He would go in there once a year to represent himself and all of the people of Israel. He would go in with the blood of an animal which he offered for his sins and the sins of the people as their representative. I want to read a few verses from Hebrews 9 that talks about it and listen to these verses; they're powerful. Hebrews 9:7 it says,

⁷ But only the high priest ever entered the Most Holy Place, and only once a year. And he always offered blood for his own sins and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance.

Verse 11–12,

¹¹ So Christ has now become the High Priest over all the good things that have come. He has entered that greater, more perfect Tabernacle in heaven, which was not made by human hands and is not part of this created world. ¹² With his own blood—not the blood of goats and calves—he entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and secured our redemption forever.

When He went into the holy place in heaven, into God's presence, He went with His own blood.” I want to read more. Verse 24–26,

²⁴ For Christ did not enter into a holy place made with human hands, which was only a copy of the true one in heaven. He entered into heaven itself to appear now before God on our behalf. ²⁵ And he did not enter heaven to offer himself again and again, like the high priest here on earth who enters the Most Holy Place year after year with the blood of an animal. ²⁶ If that had been necessary, Christ would have had to die again and again, ever since the world began. But now, once for all time, he has appeared at the end of the age to remove sin by his own death as a sacrifice.

Now picture it. Jesus, He's died on the cross. He's been raised from the dead. Now He's going to ascend into heaven. He enters heaven; I see Him just walking down this corridor, and every angel is standing at attention, stunned, in awed silence because their Creator, the second person of the Trinity, Jesus, has eternal scars now on His hands, and His brow, and His feet, and upon His back. An everlasting reminder of His immeasurable love for those created in His image and in His likeness.

As Jesus walks into the very presence of the Father, He says, “Father, I don't just come on My behalf, but if You accept this sacrifice in My precious holy blood, You accept Bayless because when I died, he died with Me. When I was buried, he was buried with Me. When I came up from the dead, he came up with Me. I am His representative. If You received this, if You receive Me, You receive Bayless, You receive Janet, You receive John, You receive Robert, You receive Sally, You receive David, You receive them all because they are in Me, and I died as their representative.” The Father looked at Him and said, “I receive them in You.”

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The Scripture says in the book of Ephesians that we are accepted in the Beloved. My friend, I'm not an outsider with God. He doesn't just tolerate me. He loves me like He loves Jesus. No, my mind cannot fathom that. Throughout eternity I'll never be able to plumb the depths of that truth, but it is true. I have been made right with God, with the righteousness of Christ. His holiness has touched me, and it has changed me. Jesus completely and totally identified with me. The Father received Him in me, Christ, my identity. We come to the letter D, which stands for dead in trespasses and sins. Again, verse 13 of Colossians 2,

¹³ You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins.

You were dead; then God made you alive. You were dead; then God made you alive. He didn't just patch you up. He didn't just put a Band-Aid on your sins. Those sins weren't just covered. You were dead in sins and trespasses. Then He made you alive.

Adam, in the garden, God said, "Adam, you rule over everything. I made it for you. You're the boss. Just one thing. One thing. That's all. One thing, Adam, I claim exclusive right to. I do set some boundaries, Adam. I determine as the Creator what's right and what's wrong, what's sin and what's not sin, tree of knowledge of good and evil." Says, "You leave that alone. That's Mine." He said, "If you ever violate that, Adam, if you ever partake of that tree," He says, "The day you do it, you'll die."

The Bible says that Eve was deceived by the serpent, but Adam was not deceived. He went into it with his eyes open. He knew exactly what he was doing. Adam decided, you know what? Who says God has to be my final authority? I'll decide for myself what's right and wrong. I mean, what may be wrong for someone else, not wrong for me, I decide that. These are moving goalposts; it just determines on what I think is right. Sounds a little bit like society today, doesn't it?

Adam said, "God, I'll decide for myself what's sin and what's not sin. I don't have to live within these constricting boundaries that You set up." Yet Adam lived quite a while after that before he died. But God said, "The day you do that, if you make that choice that day, you'll die." In the Hebrew language, in the Book of Genesis, this is what God said to Adam. "The day you do it, you will die, die." The Hebrew word die is there twice. You'll die a double death, Adam. That day, Adam did die. He died spiritually.

He was cut off from the life of God. And because Adam was the fountainhead of the human race, that affected everyone else. Listen, Romans 5:12 says,

¹² When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.

For in physical death is the separation of the spirit from the body. Spiritual death is the separation of the spirit from God. It does not mean to cease to exist. Spiritual death means you are cut off from the life of God. Spiritual death is the separation of the human spirit from their Creator, from the living God.

Somebody asks, pastor, what do you see when you go about your day? I got something to tell you. When I walk around, I see dead people. I go to the mall, and I see dead people. I go to the gas station; I see dead people. I go to the park, and I see dead people. Dead people take walks in my neighborhood. Cut off from God, dead in trespasses and sins. They need the resurrection

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life that the Holy Spirit brings, but that only comes into a person's life when a person embraces Jesus Christ. That's what changes them. You were dead, but God made you alive! Amazing! We come to the next letter, and its E stands for erased. Colossians 2:14,

¹⁴ He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross.

The word "cancel" literally means to completely erase, to make it as if it never existed. Philip's translation says, Christ has utterly wiped out the damaging evidence of broken laws and commandments, which always hung over our heads. He canceled. He utterly wiped out the evidence, the record.

Actually, that word translated—what I just quoted; it is record or evidence. Most of the older translations just had the word handwriting. He wiped out the handwriting that was against us. Every single believer in that church at Colossae, when they heard that, they knew the meaning. Everyone in the ancient world knew the meaning of that. It's actually the Greek word for autograph or signature. Interesting. It referred to a note hand signed by a debtor acknowledging his indebtedness. Almost exactly what we would refer to as an IOU.

Another translation brings it out because we broke God's laws, we owed a debt. Our sins piled one above another became an unpayable debt before God. A debt that we cannot pay, yet it's one that we must acknowledge.

When I was a kid, there was a little department store in this little shopping center, maybe two and a half, three miles from where we lived. I was probably four and a half or five. I got all the money I had, stuffed all of these coins into my pocket. My mother's birthday was coming up. I got on my little bicycle, and I rode about three miles to this little shopping center, and I went into a Buffum's department store. That's where pastor Kenneth and Angel met. I think she was working in Buffum's. Thank God for Buffum's.

I went in to Buffum's. I went into the jewelry department. I put my nose against the glass. This lady came up, says, "Young man, can I help you?" I said, "Yes, the little mouse." There was this little mouse pendant. It was just junk jewelry with rhinestones on it. Really gaudy, but I liked it.

I said, "It's my mom's birthday. I want to buy that for her." She says, "What are you going to buy it with, sweetheart?" I said, "I got this." And I pull out this like mountain of change on the counter. I was so proud. She starts counting out my pennies, my nickels, few dimes. She said, "Honey, I'm sorry. You don't have enough to pay for this." It was everything I had, everything. I remember leaving that store so dejected. Putting all that change back in my pocket and riding home thinking it was everything. I don't have anything else. It was everything, and I didn't have enough to pay.

Friend, all of our good works, all of our noble intentions, all of our personal sacrifices are not enough to pay the debt, yet we still must sign the IOU. Let me put it another way. You must plead guilty before you can be declared innocent. We must acknowledge our sin and our inability to change ourselves before we can ever receive the mercy of God's salvation. There are many people who, in their pride and their spiritual blindness, refuse to acknowledge their sinfulness or their need of a Savior. You talk to them about Jesus, and they say, "Why do I need a savior? Save from what? Repent of what?" Friend, we cannot partake of His mercy until we confess our guilt.

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Jesus said, "Repent and believe the Gospel." Repentance comes before saving faith. Some time ago, I was in a store. The lady in front of me, she's got her groceries and stuff, and the cashier said, "Okay, it's going to be whatever." She didn't have enough money to pay for her groceries. She was a bit embarrassed. She says, "Well maybe I can take this back. How much was this?" I was standing behind her. I said to the cashier. I said, "Look, I'll take care of her whole bill."

The lady turns around says, "What?" I said, "Yes, no problem." I paid for her food, and it wasn't a big deal. It's like \$40. I remember she said, "Thank you, thank you," and went her way, and it really wasn't a big deal. My friend, Jesus paid our debt and delivered us from the consequences of sin, and that is a big deal. It's the most important event in human history. He erased our debt.

We come to the final letter that I want to talk to you about, that's F, and it stands for finished. Finished. The Gospels tell us that as Jesus hung up on the cross, right before He died, His final words were, "It is finished." That certainly would apply to a lot of things, but I came across one interesting reference that said that phrase, "It is finished", was a declaration that a conquering general would make once a strategic battle or war had been won.

Upon surveying the battlefield and recognizing that the enemy's forces and strength were utterly broken and that all that was left were the mopping-up operations, that general would declare it is finished. Colossians 2:15,

¹⁵ In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.

Meaning that on the cross, Jesus defeated Satan's forces utterly. Listen to it from a New King James version. I happen to really like this. It says,

¹⁵ Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

That is in the cross. Now "principalities and powers" those are the Apostle Paul's favorite words for different ranks of demon spirits. He talks about it in the book of Ephesians; principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, host of wicked spirits. The Greek says literally superimposed against the sky. That would be in the atmosphere, over cities, and over regions trying to influence people and influence things.

Friend, on the cross, Jesus not only secured our redemption, He defeated the powers of darkness, triumphing over them. Now, we understand the word triumph, but once again that, actually has its root in something in the ancient word called a Roman triumph. It's where the word comes from. Again, all of the believers sitting in that church in Colossae they would've understood the reference. Some of them would've seen a Roman triumph because some of them no doubt had traveled to other colonies, maybe even to Rome itself.

Certainly, all of them knew what it was. It was a part of life for them. When a Roman general had won a decisive victory over an enemy kingdom, over an enemy force, when it was something strategic and important, he was given a Roman triumph. What they would do, they would take the kings, and the leaders, the generals of this conquered nation, this conquered force, and they would strip them naked. They would take all of their swords and all of their armaments, put those in a wagon, and they would put the kings and these defeated generals in chains.

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The conquering Roman general would ride in the front, and his troops would be there, and following would be this wagon filled with all of these armaments and these chained foes stripped naked behind them. They would go through all the different Roman provinces on their way to the great city of Rome. Eventually, they'd come into Rome, and there would be this huge celebration as this general came in triumph. They would give him literally a huge parade. The people would look, and they would see this defeated king and these defeated generals.

They have no armament, they are stripped naked, and they would think, "Wait, this is the one I was afraid of? This is the one that threatened my family? This is the one that threatened my way of life? This one? Look at him! He's nothing. He has no power. He's even been defeated; he's disarmed, he's stripped naked." My friend that is what Jesus Christ did through the cross to the enemies of darkness.

The devil is a defeated foe, and the Scripture says, through it, He made a public spectacle of them. If you think about it, it sure didn't seem like a triumph or a public spectacle of victory when Jesus died, did it? The disciples all thought game over; we're done, we're toast, our leader is dead. The devil himself thought he had won, "I have killed the Son of God. I have extinguished once and for all the threat."

My friend, after three days and three nights, once the claims of God's eternal justice had been forever satisfied, the Holy Spirit came hurdling down through the heavens, hurdling down through the atmosphere, hurdling down into the heart of the earth. His power surged into Jesus, raised Him from the dead, and He came up from the grave. There was nothing the devil could do about it.

Every demon on earth knew that their leader, that their master, Satan, had been eternally defeated. Then when Jesus ascended into heaven—the devil is also called the prince of the power of the air in the Scripture—but there was nothing he could do to stop Christ's ascension into heaven. Another public spectacle of his defeat.

Then when God sent the Holy Spirit back to those disciples that had previously been hiding and afraid, now they're empowered with boldness. They go out on the street, and they're preaching, and they're casting out demons. They're working miracles and they're winning converts. A public spectacle. It wasn't very long. Suddenly, the devil realizes, "I'm not just dealing with one Jesus, one God-man, in one physical location. Now there are thousands of blood-washed, Holy Spirit-filled, demon-kicking, Gospel-preaching people, taking the Gospel to everyone that will listen."

Today, my friend, there are hundreds of millions of us filled with the Holy Spirit, ablaze with the Gospel. We have received power from Jesus—greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world—and we have been commissioned to go in His name. In fact, you know Scripture says that God always causes us to triumph in Christ. We've been made part of the victory parade, my friend. His authority has been delegated to His church.

Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. You go, therefore, in my name. You cast out demons. You lay hands on the sick. You preach the Gospel to all of creation." They went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them, confirming the Word with signs following. My friend, you are the devil's biggest nightmare.

The ABC's of Christ's Redemption

If we will just wake up to what we have in Christ and believe the Scriptures. Yes, we wrestle against principalities and powers, the Scripture says that in Ephesians. But I'm wrestling against a defeated foe. I'm wrestling from a position of having already won. I'm wrestling from a position of victory. I'm wrestling from a position of being in Christ and having His authority. Oh, what a difference. What a difference. It is finished. Yes, it is.

I was down in Mexico. I'd been saved less than a year. I was down there trying to help with the crusade. I think I probably got in the way as much as I helped. But I went to the evangelist that was doing the preaching one day, I said, "What can I do to help?" He said, "Well, tonight, we're going to show a movie, and then I'm going to get up and preach after the movie. The movie is called *A Thief In the Night*. If you wouldn't mind driving around and advertising for the movie tonight." I said, "I'm in."

I jumped into my old 63 microbus, got myself a bullhorn, and drove to all these little "colonias," in the dirt roads, back in the hills, hanging out the window, "un ladrón en la noche," "Esta película tendrá un impacto en tu vida." Everywhere I went, people are looking, "Look at this long-haired white kid telling us to come to the movies." I got a couple of other people in the van, we're driving along, and this lady comes out, stops the van, waving her arms, won't let us pass. Put my head out the window, and said, "Can I help you?"

She says, "Yes, will you come into my house and pray for me?" I said, "Sure." We went into her little humble house, and she shared this story. Her dad was there. She said—I think it was for a year and a half—"Every night for the last year and a half, when the sun goes down, I lose my mind." She showed us this little dank room and says, "My father locks me in the cellar every day."

There was a padlock on the door. "Every day before the sun goes down because I completely lose my mind. I've tried to kill my children with knives, I try to kill myself. They take everything away, forks, knives, anything sharp, and they lock me in there, and I scream all night long, and I don't remember it in the morning. I get up, and I'm so tired." I said, "What happened?" She said, "My aunt is a bruja. She's a witch. She put a curse on me."

I actually think it was over a man that she liked and that her aunt liked as well. She said, "My aunt, the bruja, she put a curse on me. Ever since she did that, every single night, I lose my mind. Can you help me?" We said, "Yes, we can." We took authority over the devil in Jesus' name, commanded him to stop harassing her. Didn't see anything happen, got back in the van, driving on the road, "Un ladrón en la noche," That night for the movie, guess who was out sitting on the front row with her children?

She was there. She gave her life to Jesus. Her kids got saved. Every night of the crusade, she's there on the front row. Dear friend, you have more authority than you know. The devil's only advantage is deception. The Bible says he deceives the whole world. Two things that he does. If you look at society today and the world today, they're the main two things that are going on. Two things the Scripture specifically says the devil does, he deceives, and he accuses.

You look at society; those are the cornerstones of society today, deception and accusation. Who do you think is behind that? I know who's behind that; the defeated one. We have authority over him. In fact, the book of Ephesians declares that when Christ ascended and was seated at the right hand of God because of our identification with Him, we were raised up in seated with Him in the heavenly places far above. Here's the words again, far above all principality and power.

The ABC's of Christ's Redemption

God has placed all these principalities and powers under His feet. Jesus is the head of the church; we are His body. Where are the feet? In the head or in the body? They're in the body, meaning the newest, least member of the body of Christ, all principality, all power, all those works of darkness have been placed under your feet. One old timer said it and I still like it to this day. Says, "If you got something to say to the devil, write it on the bottom of your foot."

Now maybe you've been brought here today by a friend, maybe coming by yourself, and you've been weighing things out, looking for answers. Good for you. I think that any searching heart, any honest searching heart is going to eventually end up at the cross. Jesus is the one way to the Father, but there's a lot of ways to Jesus. I explored a whole lot of dead ends and dug a lot of dry wells, looking for answers. All of those things I was seeking, they eventually brought me to the cross and to the Son of God. Sitting in a little mission, in a town called Medford, Oregon, I gave my life to Jesus Christ. Changed everything for me.

I want to pray with you in a moment. Now, all that I can do is give you words to pray. If you'll tie a sincere heart around them and mean it, God will meet you. I want to tell you this isn't like—all right, I checked the box on religion. This changes everything. This is the most radical thing you can ever do. It will change everything. If you're a prodigal son or a prodigal daughter, you claim to believe, but you're not living like it. You claim to believe, but you don't talk like it. You claim to believe, but you don't think like it.

Prodigal, it's time for you to come home. Time for you to catch fire. Time for you to step out of that lukewarmness and start working with the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. He has work for you to do my friend. Yes, He does. In your own personal world, in your own sphere of influence, He has work for you to do. Now, for those out on the plaza or if you're watching somewhere else or you're in here, if you've never fully given your life to Jesus, I mean holding nothing back, all in, and you want to do it, I want to pray with you. If you're a prodigal son and you've been living in a far country, you got stuff going on in your life you know is not pleasing to God.

When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, he came out wrapped in grave clothes. He had life inside of him, but he's still wrapped in grave clothes. Jesus said, "Lose him and let him go." There are some that have come to new life, but they're still clutching onto the old grave clothes. Jesus wants to set you free from those things from the old life that had bound you and held you. I had people lift to hand in the last service. I don't think I should do that right now, but I would like you to just close your eyes for a moment if you would.

We're going to pray. I want to lead you in a simple prayer. If you'll put your heart behind these words and sincerely speak them to God, He'll come to you. You might put a hand over your heart. I want you to say this with me, say,

"Oh, God, I come to you. I know I've sinned. I realize I have a debt I could never pay, but in Your mercy, You came. You sent your own Son, Who willingly died in my place, Who paid my debt in full. Jesus, thank you for loving me so much. Thank you that You've wiped out that debt. I put my trust in You, Jesus. I believe You were raised from the dead, and I ask You now, be my Lord and Savior. Wherever You lead me, Jesus, I'll go. My life is no longer my own. I put everything in Your hands. It's in Your name, I pray. Amen." Amen. Amen. What a Savior!