

CCH Sermon Sunday 18th October 2020
Col 2:9-15 "More"

v9

- "Please sir, can I have some more?"
 - It's the famous line from Charles Dicken's book, Oliver Twist.
 - A poor orphan boy, Oliver, wanting more gruel from Mr Bumble.
 - "More?!!"
- Well we, as Christians, long for 'more'.
 - That's the title of our sermon today.
 - We long to experience God more
 - We long to be less of a failure in loving Jesus
 - We don't want to splutter along stuck in 2nd gear, which we all feel like at times.
 - So there's a kind of godly dissatisfaction with our Christian lives.
 - But we need to beware!
- To be dissatisfied is to be vulnerable.
- Cowboy salesmen prey on dissatisfaction
 - "Dissatisfied with your washing powder/internet connection/ (complete as required)?
 - try this new whizzy product".
 - And spiritual cowboys can do the same thing.
- The Colossians had started so well,
 - Paul delights v5 to see how firm their faith in Christ is.
 - But now they are in danger of being kidnapped. v8.
 - They were dissatisfied with Jesus.
 - They were beginning to believe the lie that they needed an addition to Jesus.
 - A "top up"
 - He did a great job in starting them out, but they now need an additional "bolt on" in the form of
 - a new idea,
 - a new practice,
 - a new experience outside of Jesus.
 - to get the "fullness"- the "real deal".
 - to boost them from bumping along with turbulence to fly high above the clouds. (more on those with Matt next week)
 - And it can be the same for us.
 - **Complete the sentence...**
 - What my Christian life really needs right now is....
 - - And Paul says no!
 - v6-7. You started with Jesus. Continue with Jesus. Don't get kidnapped.
- So where our sermon is heading today is this...

"Hunger for more of Jesus, but not for more beyond Jesus"
- Today we are going to see 4 reasons in the passage why (in spiritual terms) we don't need anything more than Jesus.
- [There's more in these verses than I can cover in the talk, so do save up questions (and further applications) for our grill the preacher afterwards].

What more do you need than Jesus, who gives us....

1) complete access to God.

v9-10.

- This is a lovely verse.
- It's very much in line with all that we saw about the wonder of Jesus in chapter 1.
 - The image of the invisible God, firstborn over all creation.
- If I can put it reverently, there's a kind of Russian Doll thing going on.
 - STAGE 1 In Christ all the fulness of the deity lives in bodily form.
 - Jesus on earth and now in heaven, is 100% human and 100% divine
 - Fully God, Fully Man.
 - It's mindblowing.
 - All of the deity is in Jesus.
 - You miss nothing of God in Jesus.
- And then mind-blowingly, STAGE 2 "in Christ, you have been brought to fulness".
 - Christians are in Christ.
 - perfectly united to him.
 - With all of him in us.
- **All of God is in Jesus, and all of Jesus is in me!**
 - Well excuse me, but why would anyone be looking for a spiritual topup outside Jesus?
- Wasn't it wonderful hearing from Piak and Nam on Wednesday about 3 new Thai believers.
 - Well the moment they came to put their trust in Jesus and turned to him as Lord,
 - they had a full connection with God.
 - All of God in Christ
 - And all of Christ in them.
 - Nothing missing.
 - That doesn't mean that they now know everything there is to know about God.
 - Or that they are perfectly without sin for the rest of their lives.
 - But that they don't need to go outside Jesus to get to know God.
 - And they don't need to go outside Jesus to experience God.
 - All of God is in Jesus, all of Jesus is in them.
- And it's the same for you.
 - You don't have to scabble around the universe looking for God any more,
 - picking up extra titbits here and bits there
 - a bit of mindfulness for self-actualisation
 - A few insights from new age mysticism for balance
 - A trip to the Holy Land to really feel Jesus.
 - A new bible reading regime to feel like you're making progress.
 - You have fulness in Jesus. The king over every power and authority v11.
 - And he's come to you and made his home with you by his Spirit.
- Do you see why the punchline is Hunger for "more of" Jesus, not "more beyond" Jesus?
- **He gives complete access to God.**

What more do you need than Jesus, who gives us....

2) a complete new start v11.

- Now circumcision was a Jewish ritual.
 - We don't need to go into all the details (!),
 - suffice it to say that it was an external operation on 8-day old Jewish males.
 - Maybe some people in Colossae were saying that for Christians to be "complete", (whether they were from a Jewish background or not) they also needed circumcision.
- But Paul says **no**, you don't need something done on the **outside**, but on the **inside**, on the heart.
 - "A circumcision not done by human hands".
 - It's what the prophets had promised- circumcision of the heart.
- When you become a Christian there's a clean break with the old sinful nature, the flesh.
 - you are changed on the inside. Born again.
 - Your old dead heart is cut off and a new one alive in the Spirit is given to you
 - so that you have a new desire to want to please Jesus.
 - The moment you put your trust in Jesus, the old has gone, the new has come.
- In fact there's a death and a resurrection.
 - Because what happened to Jesus happened to you.
 - He died, he was buried, he rose again.
 - That's why the phrase "In Christ" and "with Christ" in the pass. is so important.
 - ▲ put a marmite jar in a rucksack.
 - Where that rucksack goes, the marmite jar goes.
 - Downstairs to the basement. It goes down.
 - Up to the top of the house, it goes up.
 - And through our union with Jesus, what happened to Jesus has happened to us.
 - He died- we died to our old life.
 - He was buried- there was a clean break with our old life.
 - We rose- we rise to a new power with the Holy Spirit helping us.
 - To change the analogy (as one writer puts it) there's a strong knot that ties us to Christ, and wherever he goes we go with him- to death, to burial, to life.
- And that's why Baptism is such an important sign of being one with Jesus.
 - Down into the water with Jesus- representing death.
 - Up out of the water with Jesus- representing new life.
 - If you haven't been baptised, and you have come to know Jesus, let me know,
 - I'd love to organise a baptism service for us in the swimming pool at One Leisure, there are already 2 people in the church ready to get baptised.
 - It's a wonderful sign – down into death in Christ, up into new life in Christ.
- *But can I just clarify something about this "complete new start".*
 - *Though in Jesus you have shed your old life,*
 - *That doesn't mean that you are sinless.*
 - *You haven't shed sin completely.*
 - *Paul says later in the book that we still need to "put to death whatever belongs to our earthly nature- sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed". (3:5)*
 - *That death needs to be worked out in every area of our lives, and that takes a lifetime.*
 - *This fulness of Christ is not fulness of perfection yet.*
- Nevertheless, in Jesus, those Colossians, and those Thai Xns have a complete new life.
 - So why would they ever go back to their old life of buddhism?
 - Why would we ever go back to our old life of
 - living for materialism, or promotion or having the perfect house?
 - What more do we need than Jesus?

What more do you need than Jesus, who gives us....

1) Complete access to God. 2) A complete new start.

3) a complete cancellation of charges.

- This is really wonderful, and worth pausing on.
- When Jesus made us alive with him-
 - at our conversion,
 - symbolised in our baptism,
- All our sins were forgiven.
 - Do you see the completeness in the word **ALL**? v13b.
 - Past, present, future.
 - Everything you've done in thought, word and deed.
 - Even things you didn't do that should have done, wiped away.
- Well how? Answer- v14.
- ▲ I'm ashamed to say that I had two speeding tickets from my time living in Belgium.
 - On the main road from Calais to Brussels you go past Gent.
 - And it got us a couple of times.
 - A sudden reduction in speed limit.
 - If you're not looking carefully you can carry on sailing past at 120 kph.
 - And then you get a letter through the post.
 - A written charge.
 - Penalty €70.
 - I lived in Belgium and I didn't obey their laws.
 - I was guilty and had a debt to pay.
- Well you and I are made in the image of God, to fully reflect him and his perfection to all around us in truthfulness, faithfulness, kindness.
 - But we've failed.
 - We've lived in his world and not obeyed his laws.
 - We are guilty and have a debt to pay.
 - There's a legal charge that stands against us and condemns us.
 - It's almost like a letter hangs over us and says "guilty of traffic offences".
 - except it's worse- "guilty of divine offences"
 - It's not a one liner- one traffic offence. It's pages and pages of tiny writing.
 - And if each sin was a £10 and we only sinned ten times a day, the debt would be a million pounds by age 28.
 - But each sin carries an infinite debt because a sin is against an infinite God.
 - But what did God do?
 - He took that charge.
 - The amount to pay is impossibly large putting us into eternal debt.
 - And he nailed it to the cross
 - Remember that above a criminal's head was the legal charge that condemned them.
 - For Jesus, Pilate wrote "Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews".
 - But that's not the only thing nailed to the cross.
 - The crime was my crime and yours. My list and yours.
 - Jesus was dying with the sins of the world on his back.
 - And Jesus paid them with his blood.
 - Because only the death of an eternal King is enough to pay the price of our eternal debt.
 - So now they are cancelled- not in a legal fiction, but the punishment is fully exhausted by Jesus in our place.

- HE FORGAVE US **ALL** OUR SINS. We sometimes sing.....

My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, o my soul
- So when you next feel guilty or rubbish or a bit useless.
 - Teenager- row with parents.
 - Grandparent guilty of grumbling and bitterness.
 - At work, conscious bending the truth
 - Any of us, valued things in the creation ahead of Creator
- Well “Jesus paid it all”.
 - You don’t need a top up of good works.
 - You don’t need some Christian mood music to feel better
- You just need to come back to Jesus.
 - You need to look at the cross, as we will be doing at Communion this afternoon and say “Thank you”.
 - Thank you, Jesus, that you paid the price.
 - Perhaps remember this verse. **My charges nailed to the cross.**
 - Say that to yourself.
- And look what flows on from this...

What more do you need than Jesus, who gives us....

4) a complete victory over all powers

v15.

- The Colossians came from a culture where people would have believed in spiritual forces.
 - Angels, demons, spirits.
 - Localised deities.
 - Malevolent powers, forces
- People today don’t believe in them do they in this scientific age?
 - Or do they?
 - I heard a fascinating talk this week on a Christian view of culture.
 - The speaker, Dan Strange from Oak Hill college told a fascinating anecdote...
 - (You can read about it in an article he wrote which I’ve linked to Dig Deeper).
 - Apparently when you are working on a shift in the police or in telesales you must never say “It’s quiet tonight”!
 - The moment you say it’s quiet, the night shift will go super crazy and the phones will ring.
 - Now people don’t necessarily admit this, but it’s as if there are malevolent forces listening that spring into action to make sure that it’s not quiet!
 - People may not say it as starkly as that, but society is a lot more superstitious, open to the supernatural and paranormal than we think.
 - And even Christians can get a little frightened.
 - What if those dark forces come after me?
 - Well Paul says, “do you know what... When you come to Jesus, the head of the universe, the one in whom things in heaven and earth, visible and invisible, thrones powers, rulers and authorities were made, **you are safe**”.

- Satan and his forces are **real**.
 - As Halloween approaches,
 - I'm glad that Poundland removed its £1 Ouija boards from its shelves.
 - To dabble in the occult is to play with fire and to play with death.
- But come to Jesus, and you are safe.
 - At the cross, Jesus not only won the victory over sin
 - He won the victory over Satan as well.
 - He pictures it in this triumph imagery.
 - It's just like when a Roman army had been victorious over an enemy, they would march through the streets with their defeated enemies chained behind them as a public spectacle.
 - Well Jesus has won the victory over Satan.
 - Our guilt has gone.
 - There's nothing that Satan has to throw in our face.
 - He's been disarmed.
- ▲ There's a new 2 hour animation of the John Bunyan classic *Pilgrim's Progress*.
 - We've watched it twice as a family- it's free on the internet- I recommend it.
 - (Again the link is on the Dig deeper sheet).
 - Or you may have read the book- the 2nd most published book in the world after the bible.
 - It tells the story of *Christian*, on his journey from the city of destruction to the celestial city.
 - and the many challenges he meets on the way.
 - One of the challenges is a pair of lions.
 - They are ferocious.
 - Christian is fearful he's going to get eaten up.
 - But do you know what?
 - The lions are chained.
 - They can't reach the path that he's walking down between them.
- Satan is a fearful enemy, roaring like a lion.
 - But he's a defeated lion.
 - He a chained lion.
 - He can't get you!
 - You are safe with Jesus.
- **Christ Church Colossae.**
 - You don't need the top up of spells, circumcision, superstition to be really safe with God.
 - You just need Jesus. Hunger for more of him, not more beyond him.
- **Christ Church Huntingdon**
 - You don't need the top up of being on the rota to feel good about your Christian life.
 - You don't need to have a three hour bible reading every day.
 - You don't need to be able to remember the memory verse.
 - You are already safe, through what Jesus did
 - Applied to you when you trusted Jesus.
 - Hallelujah for the cross.
 - Even if your path takes you very close to the Lions of Covid
 - or whatever Satan may throw at you,

- you are safe.
- Look to ONLY him.
 - Don't be dissatisfied with him.