

Raised with Christ: Living by the Spirit, Not by the Law

Overview

A teaching on Colossians 2–3, focusing on the supremacy of Jesus, the futility of self-effort, and the necessity of the Holy Spirit for true transformation.

Core Scripture:

- Colossians 2:8–15, 3:1–10 (NKJV)
- Romans 6–8
- Galatians 5:13–25
- Ezekiel 36:25–27

Key Themes

1. The Supremacy and Sufficiency of Christ

- Colossians centers on Jesus: His person, His work, and His preeminence (“He is the image of the invisible God...” Colossians 1:15–20).
- Salvation is not about methods, rules, or spiritual toolkits—it’s about knowing and following the living Christ.
- The law and religious rituals can bring us to Christ, but cannot change us or empower us to live righteously.

2. The Danger of Legalism and Self-Effort

- Paul warns against being “cheated” by philosophy, tradition, or religious systems that focus on outward conformity (Colossians 2:8).
- Human efforts—rules, rituals, or even good habits—cannot transform the heart. They may keep us busy, but not holy.
- True circumcision is “without hands”—a work God does in the heart, not something we can perform or control.

3. The Power of the Holy Spirit

- Only the Spirit of God can produce genuine change. We are called to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Jesus—not as a checklist, but as a surrender.

- The same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead lives in believers and gives power to overcome sin (Romans 8:10–11).
- Ezekiel 36 promises both a new heart and God’s Spirit within us, who will “cause you to walk in My statutes.”

4. Living the New Life: Put Off and Put On

- The call to “put off” old ways (anger, malice, lust, etc.) and “put on” the new self is not accomplished by willpower, but by yielding to the Spirit.
- The old self is crucified with Christ; the new life is received, not achieved.
- The “how” of Christian living is not a set of tools or techniques, but a “who”—the indwelling Holy Spirit.

5. Walking by the Spirit

- “Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16) is a promise, not just a command.
- The fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, etc.—is evidence of God’s work, not self-produced virtue.
- We must continually give our consent and assent to the Spirit’s leading, rather than relying on self-effort.

Practical Exhortations

- **Reject self-made religion:** Don’t settle for outward conformity, rules, or spiritual “toolkits.” They cannot produce life or lasting change.
- **Embrace heart transformation:** Allow God to do the deep, sometimes uncomfortable work of cutting away what doesn’t belong—deep at the core of who you are.
- **Depend on the Spirit:** Daily surrender and give assent to the Spirit’s leading. He alone empowers us to put off the old and put on the new.
- **Don’t defend sin or self:** Since you’ve already declared your guilt and need for grace, don’t justify or make room for sinful attitudes or behaviors.
- **Remember your identity:** You are raised with Christ; your life is hidden in Him. Set your mind on things above, not on earthly measures of success or righteousness.

Closing Prayer Highlights

- Asking God to keep us from trying to live the Christian life in our own strength.
- Praying for a willingness to let God cut away what needs to go and to lead us by His Spirit.
- Thanking God for the resurrection power of the Spirit and for righteousness that comes by faith, not by the law.

Summary:

True Christian living is not about striving harder or following more rules. It's about dying to self, being raised with Christ, and walking daily in the power and direction of the Holy Spirit. Our hope and victory rest in Christ alone—He is all, and in all.