

Colossians 2: 13 **You can really be free!** 6/24/01

A woman was once on a two week trip in Europe with her best friend and every night she would call home and tell her husband what she had been doing and then get any news about what was happening back home. Well one night her husband interjected into the conversation. And the cat died last night. She was just shocked and hurt but what bothered her the most was her husband's lack of tact and diplomacy. "Well, how would you have liked me to tell it to you.?" Well you could have first told me one night that the cat was having a wonderful day. And the next night that he chased a ball up onto the roof. And the next day that you couldn't get him to come down and the next day that he rained really hard and then the last day that despite all your efforts the cat fell off the roof and died. OK dear I will work on that. Well thank-you, she said. And by the way, how is mother. Well, she chased this ball up on onto the roof.

Well Paul, in Colossians 2:13-15 decides that now is not the time to demonstrate any diplomacy or tact. He speaks with bluntness and directness. Listen as I read.

We have been made alive. Remember when you found out you were dead? That is really what Paul is telling them. Remember back when you first heard the gospel and the truth of the message convicted you of your true state. You were dead. This same theme is found in much of Paul's writings. Ephesians 2:1-2 *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. There is no getting around it.* We can't couch the language or make it sound any better. You were dead. But God made you alive. Amen. And how did he make you alive. He made you alive with Christ. Not by your works, not by your heritage. Not by your tradition. He made you alive with Christ. And then Paul rattles off in short pithy phrases what all that entailed and I wanted to try to bring this truth home to you to make it fresh for those of you who have already experienced it and.

He first of all forgave our sins by canceling the written code. Now, back in Paul's time the parchment that was used was not at all pourous. When written upon in ink, it would not soak into the parchment and become set. If you were left handed you would be in trouble because you would smudge everything. Anything written could be easily wiped off as though it was never there. Paul says that every one of us has a piece of parchment with our name at the top and underneath is a listing of all times we have broken any and every aspect of God's holy law. Some of those parchments must have been of world record length. Notice he also says that this parchment stood as a testimony. It is like the pictures in the post office of wanted criminals. It includes the charges against the person pictured. Paul says that Jesus has wiped it clean. And then he shifts metaphors again. This same piece of paper with all of our sins and failures were taken by Christ and nailed over his head. Remember that announcement over the head of Jesus. King of the Jews. That was in many ways a declaration of the crime he had been condemned for. Well, Paul says over the head of Jesus was tacked your sins and mine. And he paid the penalty. He took the debt.