

Eraser
CANCELLED THE NOTE

Col. 2:14

INTRODUCTION:

We read he graciously forgave us all of our short-comings, cancelled the note that stood against us with its requirements, and has put it out of our way by nailing it to the cross. He thus stripped the dominions of power and made a public display of them triumphal over them by the cross.

On the last visit to Philadelphia the late President, John F. Kennedy, in response to a man who made a request for the pencil he had been using. On one end of the pencil was an eraser which showed signs of much use. Later on the man asked him what he cherished most about the pencil. The man replied, when I look at the eraser, I am reminded that great men also make mistakes.

Which serves to remind us, that none is perfect. That is why they put erasers on pencils.

However, from this story we have suggested in the Scripture that there are the mistakes of men which we call sin. And no man had the power to erase them, they are recorded, and they are not easily erased as a simple error. They are written in ink that spell the rebellion against God and presents a hopeless case.

We are unable to remove our sins, yet God has provided a divine eraser, by which he is able to remove all of our sins. Paul is speaking of this when he refers to Christ blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and he took it all away by nailing it to His cross.

Now in everyday life, there are certain truths that I think this text points out. And three or four words that we might think of. First of all, here is a record. And here is a removal, registration, and here is a reception.

Boys Normal School Day

First of all, let us consider the record. Paul speaks of the handwriting of ordinances. This is the only time that the word "handwriting" appears in the New Testament. That it is found often in the early documents. The written record of the ordinary events of life in Paul's day literally it means written with the hand.

In the commercial life of that time, it meant a written agreement. It was something like a certificate of debt or a bond. When a man made a debt, he signed a certificate which was his admission that he owed the sum written or recorded therein.

For instance, if a man borrowed a certain amount of money, the one lending the money wrote the capital sum lent to him and in accordance with a note of hand, the borrower had signed the note. And so here was a record of his own handwriting.

Now Paul says that God holds such a note of hand or certificate of debt against us. And since this debt enters in ordinances, it suggests that here is a debt that we have failed to keep. Both God's written and moral law. Now this is a law we can only sign the bond of recognition to the obligation. And it involves a personal admission of guilt. Here is a certificate of a debt with is contrary to us. Not only are we unable to keep God's law perfectly, but it also stands between us and our approach to God for fellowship.

You will remember in the Old Testament, the Mosaic Code was God's law written down on Mt. Sinai. And men were at that time responsible and obligated. Today the law's of God are written in men's hearts. And to restore the fellowship and to help a man to fulfill his obligation, this is the thing that is in the heart of man and how he is going to do it.

II. Removal

Now this has to do with blotting out. Here is a record. The handwriting of ordinances. Paul says these are going to (be blotted out.) This is found two or three times in the New Testament.

They that walk in white - I will -3- never blot his name -

(Rev. 3:5) - it speaks of God not blotting our name from the Book of Life.

Peter said to the people repent & turn to him, to have your sins wiped out.

(Acts 3:19) - It speaks of sin being blotted out and in our Text Paul tells us

that God in Christ has blotted out the certificate of debt, which was against us.

Now the word itself means to rub out, wipe out, or erase.

The practice of blotting out the writing was a common one in ancient times.

Some manuscripts were washed out or were scraped off and were used over and over again. As we would think of a blackboard today, you would write on this board some notation and then later, you would wash it off or brush it off and use it again.

Plato speaks of blotting out a manuscript but in commercial transaction the most widely used method was simply marking across the bond or the certificate of debt with a large "X" - noting that the obligation had been crossed out.

Or either, there was written across the debt the word satisfied in full.

Now God has crossed out or cancelled the certificate of debt which he held against us. That is, it is simply to write it off. Now not even a banker would do this.

Suppose you owed a note at the bank, and you were unable to pay it. Now the banker would endanger his bank if he simply ignored or forgave the debt. The banker has two choices. Either he could foreclose on whatever security stood behind the note, or else were he able and so disposed, he could pay the note himself for you.

Now God faced these two alternatives in your case. Since he is righteous, the debt must be paid. But being merciful, he did not foreclose on your soul. Instead, he paid the debt himself. He blotted out the certificate. Christ dying on the cross as God was in Christ - reconciling the world unto himself. 2 Cor. 5:19.

God is at work today in the world. Graham L. Hales said, as I hung up the receiver, I felt a renewed sense of depression. What is happening, I asked myself.

The caller was a close friend who had just told him of his decision to leave the Pastorate to enter Government Service. Quite a few times lately he had received the same type of news about other friends. For many had told him that it seemed that nothing was happening in the church anymore. Nothing really important - nothing exciting.

Now there are many reasons for this. One is the (prosperity) which we have today often dampens our realization that we really need God. The progress of Science makes religion as it is usually understood pretty dull stuff. Now we could list a lot of similar reasons as a basis for this. Certainly we have seen massive building programs and expanding numbers on Church Staffs and all of these things in which to pack the pews. But the action people see little else happening, especially when we get outside of the Church Building. The younger generation seems unwilling to put up with this kind of religion. We see only a type of sharp contrast here.

Now the early church had no buildings. They proclaimed their message to people where they lived and worked. In the public, in the streets, wherever they went they talked about Christ being raised from the dead and being able to blot out their sins.

We have lost that spirit in our churches and there has developed a great division between church people and poor people. Between church people and those who have needs in the community. Between church people and those of other races. Between church people and the politicians. Today there are the youth of the land that had rather follow a crusade with Senator Spong or McCarthy than to go on a church canvass or a church revival. Now is this the reason why so many feel that God is not working today. Where is God at work? And what is the standard answer which we give today about the situation as we seek to save the world. We are to know that Christ has over come - what Christ did in his life, and death and resurrection still stands. The victorious power of evil had been defeated. It cannot win. Evil cannot. Now we find this hard sometimes to believe. We see how effective the retreating forces of evil are. But as long as we still build up our barriers and our divisions separate men from men, we must be

willing not to glorify crime in the street or war, but to glorify the Saviour. The time is here now for us to discover where God is at work. What Christ did on this earth is continuing to be done. And once we see this entire message and change, then we will discover that God works today to blot out, to erase, to remove sin. He cannot only heal the sick but he can work today to blot out hate and hate was the thing that crucified Christ. He went to the Cross to show his love, to the world, but it was prejudices, greed, ignorance, oppression, evil forces that were fighting against Christ that put him to death. Now what a difference it would make if we could get all of the youth of this land oriented in this type of work and pattern. That we could see God everywhere working in the classrooms, the laboratories, and that these marches and riots then would turn into a time in which we would recognize that Christ's way of love is the way to attack evil. That this is the way in which he can blot out this sin.

III. Registration

Registration is God in Christ - the certificate of debt out of the way. By nailing it to the cross. That sounds different from the idea of Omar, the modern man who advised - live fast, die young, and make a good looking corpse.

Now there is the example of the authentic bond such as a certificate of debt which was publicly registered. Now this is suggestive of the thought that when Jesus died on the cross, he publicly registered that the certificate of debt had been paid. The debt, itself, was nailed to the cross Paul indicates that in this Jesus completely identified himself with the sins and took it out of the way, out of the midst, and this certificate of debt stood between God and man. He removed the barrier between God and man, he crossed out the debt. Paul called the righteousness of God in Christ. It means that God chooses to regard those in Christ as though they had not sinned. Because Christ in His death on the cross put an "X" mark across the debt.

Suppose you would take a sheet of paper and write on it the sins you have committed this past week. Now after you list the sins, take and cross the entire page with a

large "X". What do you see. In the first place a large cross. Jesus probably was crucified on a cross that was shaped like a large plus sign. Or the Roman's used the cross sometimes shaped like the letter "X". So when you cross out your sins you are reminded that Jesus was nailed to a cross. And that the name of Jesus Christ is able to "x" out your debt. When Jesus died on the cross - God marked "X" across it. He wrote Christ crucified across the debt. Thereafter when God looks at the record, he does not see your sin - rather he sees, Christ crucified. And this makes possible his forgiveness or his blotting out of your debt.

IV. Reception

Now what we have been talking about, Paul is not saying that men are auto- matically saved because God has blotted out the certificate of debt, which he held against all men. For Paul is writing to those, who through faith in Christ Jesus, Col. 1:4, have personally appropriated God's gift, and has accepted this.

The certificate of debt characterized by the law was against us. And since you and I cannot pay the debt, God paid it for us. Now he comes to us in grace offering his forgiveness, to all who will receive it. If you reject his free gift, then your sins remain a debt. A debt which you cannot pay.

Now let me refer again to the banker. Suppose that the banker did offer to pay your note, but you refused his gracious offer. Since you cannot pay the debt, you leave him no choice. He must foreclose on your home or whatever other security you have pledged for the note. Now in your dealing with God, that which is at stake is your immortal soul. God offers you forgiveness for your sin. But if you refuse him, the debt must be paid and the wages of sin is death.

Martin Luther tells of the vision he had as he was visited by satan. Satan placed a large roll of paper before him and asked him to read it. As he began to read - he saw that it was the record of his own life. And written in his own hand. It

recorded every sin. Finally Satan said, is that record true and did you write it. Martin Luther admitted that it was true but as Satan prepared to leave him in despair - Martin Luther cried it is true, every word of it is true. But you may write across it all, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin. That makes all the difference in the world. For only Christ can blot out, erase, and remove this from our record. We find that in a report given from the Near East, from one of our Mission Hospitals, that an Arab needing a blood transfusion - an appeal was made for someone to donate blood. A Christian woman who was blind volunteered her blood for the Arab, whom she did not know. When the transfusion was made, the Arab asked to see the person who had donated blood, for the saving of his life. When he saw the blind woman, he began to weep. To think that here was one who cared enough to share life's blood to save him from death. In like fashion, it is the love of Christ that makes missionaries go across the world and keeps them in their place of responsibility amid the dangers and the difficulties. It is hard to stay sometimes in these places. Sometimes the results are slow coming. And the problems are great.

There are those who hear this message today whose lives are being wasted. And those lives are being lived for self. There are those who are thinking only in terms of how they can gain or how they can enjoy, or how they can advance themselves above their fellowmen. There is a much better way to live. That way is to heed the words of Jesus, who said, if any man will come after me - let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow after me.

Some Things - Wish could Eraser - Betsey Hazer - (hand writing well), Tumbled Weighed - found wanting -

The best life is the life in which you turn away from yourself and give all to Jesus Christ. As you take up your cross and follow him, you can be confident that he will blot out the handwriting of the ordinances that was against you. Because he has nailed this to the cross.

Man - mid 50's Dying of cancer - Pastor - Bel Sieb - said Pastor 10 years ago - The church ask me to teach a class of 9 yr. old Boys in S.S. - I told them it was too busy - it was in my prime, heavy demands - Here I am 10 yrs later Dying with the greatest regret of my life! If 10 yrs ago I had taken that time to teach a class of boys - By now 100 boys would have passed through my class - would have invested my life in 100 Boys & many of them would have been scattered through the world in service - I can't take any of my money with me - What a Fool I've been + can't lose -