

Colossians 2:13-15

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[0 : 0 0] Salvation belongs to the Lord. This core truth, simply and yet powerfully expressed by Jonah from the belly of the great fish, was illustrated this morning as we spent some time considering God's saving work on behalf of His people in the times of Gideon. We explored the who, the why, and the how of God's salvation. And in the matter of the how, focused on God's *modus operandi* of saving His people through a mighty warrior. Those of you who were able to be here this morning will remember God's first words to Gideon, the Lord is with you, mighty warrior. Now Gideon, as we've been seeing in the mornings these past few weeks, together with all the judges and partial deliverers, illustrates the big picture of God's salvation and points forward to Jesus, God's ultimate and perfect mighty warrior. Now having been pointed to Jesus by Gideon, I want to spend some time considering Jesus as God's mighty warrior as He is presented in the New Testament or in one place, on one occasion in the New Testament. It would be a sad thing to be pointed towards Jesus and then not go to Jesus. Go to Jesus and consider Jesus as God's conqueror, as God's victor, as God's mighty warrior. Now the New Testament is replete with the language of victory and of Christ as the victorious one. In the language of revelation, the Lamb is the one who has overcome all His enemies, while God's people, in the words of Paul, are those who are led in triumphal procession in Christ.

We are led in triumphal procession in Christ. There's no doubting that the victory has already been won. I think it's a universally recognized protocol that you don't have triumphal processions before the victory has been won. That just doesn't work. Imagine if there was an open-top bus tour around Aberdeen before the final of the Scottish Cup when Aberdeen will win later on this year. Well, it would be a strange thing if they had that open-tour procession before the actual game.

That's not the way it works. And so if we're being told that we are led in triumphal procession in Christ, that very categorically declares for us that the victory has already been won.

But how and over whom or what has the victory been won? Now we're going to focus on one passage, it's really just part of one passage, that highlights two aspects of Christ's victory as God's mighty warrior. And there are verses that we've read, or there are certainly verses within the passage that we've read in Colossians chapter 2. And our focus will be on verse 13b, the second half of the verse, through to verse 15. Let's just read again those, well, two and a half verses.

He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code with its regulations that was against us and that stood opposed to us. He took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

[4 : 03] Now the manner in which we want to think about these words that we've read is as follows. We want to, first of all, consider briefly the identity of the victor, the identity of the conqueror. But then we want to also consider, and we'll spend a little bit more time on this, consider the nature of the victory, the nature of the conquest. And then finally, in the time that remains, consider briefly the challenge of our reality. And that, at the moment, is probably just a little bit unclear what I'm referring to, and that's fine, because in due course, hopefully it will become clear. But we want to begin with the identity of the victor. Who is the one who wins the victory that secures the salvation of God's people? Now this morning I quoted from verse 15, as I sought to identify Jesus as God's ultimate mighty warrior. In the language of the triumph by the cross, well, it seems so appropriate to go from

Gideon and say, well, here is Jesus, God's mighty warrior. But I'll be honest and say that this was a verse that came to me as I was preparing the morning sermon, and I thought, well, that's appropriate. But I didn't really give it a great deal of thought, other than saying, well, let's bring this into the sermon and mention it because it seems to fit. But then subsequent to preparing this morning's sermon, having decided that I would actually think about this text this evening, I was just a little thrown as I gave it a little bit more thought and consideration. And what threw me a little concerns this very question of the identity of the one who conquers, of the one who is spoken of here in this passage, and particularly to make this a little bit more clear and not quite so, what would we say, mysterious, the identity of the he of verse 13b, where we begin our text. He forgave all our sins, having canceled the written code.