

The Parade

Pastor Carl Toti

Weekend of October 3–4, 2026

SCRIPTURE

Colossians 2:13–15 (NLT)

KEY VERSE

“In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.” — Colossians 2:15

Also read: John 12:31 and 2 Corinthians 2:14

TODAY'S REFLECTION

Picture a man named Ray. He spent nine years in prison for something the evidence eventually proved he never did. Then one Monday morning a judge signed the order: conviction vacated, every charge dismissed, “This man is free.” Ray walked into the sunlight. But somebody forgot to call the monitoring company. The band on his ankle kept buzzing, and a voice kept reading a script about an old sentence. Ray was free on paper and bound in practice. That is how some Christians live. Heaven has closed the case, yet something from the old system still buzzes. But a buzzing monitor cannot overturn a judge’s verdict.

Point One: The Judgment, Not the Tragedy

John 12:31

At Calvary it looked as though the world was putting Jesus on trial. In truth, God was putting sin on trial, and Jesus stepped into our judgment and bore what should have fallen on us. Satan is not God’s equal. He is a usurper who rules a fallen system through deception, accusation, and the fear of death. In the ancient world, the charge against a condemned man was fastened above his head. Paul says our charge sheet was nailed up there with Jesus. And when He cried, “It is finished,” He used the very word written across a debt when the balance was paid in full. Satan was decisively defeated at the cross, is resisted now in Christ’s power, and will be removed when Christ returns. He is a man who has been sentenced and is still walking around in the parking lot.

BIG TAKEAWAY

The cross is not where evil won a round. It is where evil lost the war. The verdict stands.

Point Two: The Triumph

Colossians 2:15

In Paul’s day, a general who won a great victory was granted a triumph. The city shut down. Trumpeters led the way, then wagons of plunder, then the conquered king and his generals in chains, stripped of crowns and robes. Behind them, high in a golden chariot, came the general. Paul says that is what happened at the cross. Jesus did not simply beat the rulers and authorities. He stripped them of everything they used to terrify you: the armor, the authority, the accusation. He did it boldly, in the open, where the whole universe could watch. Rome used the cross to say, “This is what we do to enemies.” Jesus took that instrument of humiliation and made it His chariot.

BIG TAKEAWAY

On the cross it was not Christ who was stripped and humiliated. It was Satan and his forces. Some Christians live beneath their victory because they are more impressed with the enemy than with the cross.

Point Three: The Fragrance

2 Corinthians 2:14

In a Roman triumph, incense filled the streets. The victory had a sight, a sound, and a smell. Paul says we are now the fragrance left behind by the victory of Jesus. Think of walking into a restaurant in your best jacket while someone nearby orders sizzling fajitas. You never ordered them, but forty-five minutes later you smell like a combination plate. You were close enough that it got on you. If you have been close to Jesus, something should get on you. Your marriage, your workplace, your attitude, and your home ought to smell different. Jesus did not bring you into His victory so you could watch the parade. He intends for you to carry its fragrance everywhere you go.

BIG TAKEAWAY

The question is no longer, “Did Jesus win?” The question is, “Can anybody smell His victory on you?”

So stop living as though the enemy still has a case against you. The verdict has been rendered, the debt is canceled, the powers are disarmed, and the parade has already begun. You are in it.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank You that the cross was not Your defeat but Your public victory. Thank You for canceling the record of every charge against me and nailing it to the cross. Where an old sentence still buzzes in my mind, silence it with the truth that I am forgiven, clean, and free. Open my eyes to see the enemy stripped and You enthroned. Forgive me for being more impressed with the accuser than with Your cross. Holy Spirit, fill my home, my work, and my relationships with the aroma of Your grace. Let people be near me and know that I have been near the King. In the mighty name of Jesus, Amen.

ACTION STEPS

- **Name the buzzing.** Write down one accusation or old sentence you have been living under. Next to it, write “Canceled at the cross.” Speak it aloud this week whenever it returns.
- **Walk in the parade.** Choose one place this week (your home, your workplace, your school) and decide how you will carry grace, peace, or courage there on purpose.
- **Spread the fragrance.** Encourage, forgive, or serve one person this week in a way that points them to Jesus.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Where am I free on paper but still bound in practice? What “monitor” keeps buzzing in my life?
2. Am I more impressed with the enemy or with the cross? What would change if I truly believed the powers were stripped?
3. If someone spent a week around me, what would they smell: the victory of Jesus, or something else?
4. Who in my life needs to encounter grace and peace from me this week?

NOTES & JOURNALING

What is God saying to me through this message?

The accusation I am laying down:

Where I will carry the fragrance this week:

Prayers & reminders: