

Four Things Every Christian Should Have

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Preached on: Wednesday, January 16, 2019

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Well, take your Bibles and let's go back to the book of Colossians. It's been 17 years since I've studied through Colossians in any careful way and I want us to do some more in Colossians on Sunday night. Colossians 1. We have some very practical exhortations here that the Apostle Paul gives and as I cover this text, I'm just so aware that it deserves a series of sermons but I'm purposing not to do that but to glean some real ordinary things that hopefully will be a refresher for you and a reaffirmation in your hearts.

Colossians 1, beginning in verse 9. We'll go through verse 15.

9 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. 13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

So Paul is writing to the church at Colossae, he is separated from them and he's rejoicing that he's heard the report that the Gospel is bearing fruit in the city of Colossae. He's rejoicing about these believers and so he tells us there as we begin in verse 9, it says, "The day that I heard, a church was planted and begun in Colossae. I have been praying some basic things for you." And I think that's a good way to look at these, some basic things. I entitled this "Four Things Every Christian Should Have." Four things every Christian should have.

Now we begin by looking at I. and that's up in verse 9 and I'll just summarize this area under the word "understanding." He wants them to have understanding. He says it there, "For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding."

Now in this day like in our day, there's just a lot of false doctrine about Christ. They, of course, had the Gnostic heresies, they had the Judaizers, they had some folks who had crept into the churches and began to teach that angels were actually the agents of salvation, so there are a lot of things going around and any pastor, and as Paul being an apostle who was a church-planter and also a pastor, was very concerned that that flock be grounded in the truth of Christ and in the truth of the Gospel. Sometimes, perhaps, you hear your pastor preach and you think, "Boy, the pastor, he just puts so much emphasis and he's so repetitive on guarding the Gospel and making sure the truths of Christ are protected," and we live in a day when that's not the style, that's not in vogue. Well, it's Paul's style and it's God's style. I mean, the very first thing Paul says, "I want you to have the true knowledge of who Christ is, how He saves us, that is, what His Gospel is about." You need that understanding. That's one of the things every Christian should have.

Now he says here, "I want you to have," now let me look at it there again in verse 9, he says, "I want you to be filled with the knowledge of His will." The Greek scholars tell us that ought to be amplified to get the full intent of the author. It's a full and accurate knowledge and what he means is, "I want you to have much more than just mental assent. I want you to have much more than just the facts." Now, it's important to have the facts right but Christian knowledge goes beyond just cold facts. There are a lot of people in the world today, as a matter of fact, you can go to Vanderbilt or Oxford or Harvard and you can study the Bible but it's studied as just a book of history and a book of narratives and a book of information.

Well, that's what he says I don't want you to have. This is not just mental assent and that's why he goes on and amplifies the last part, "in all spiritual wisdom and in understanding." Someone said knowledge is desirable only when seasoned by understanding. In other words, when you know the doctrine of Christ, when you know the truths of the Gospel, do you have the wisdom and understanding to make life application? Does it mean something to you in your life or does it only get into the memory aspects of your brain?

There are a lot of people who are born into this world that just have a great inherent ability to remember things. Charles Spurgeon was one of those. Charles Spurgeon never, I shouldn't say never, his pattern was to prepare his sermons on Saturday night. Do you know why? Everything he'd read and everything he studied that week, he could call it back to memory in perfection. He could tell you page 74 in So-and-so's book he read on Tuesday, "He said this, this, this and this." So he could just put it all together in his mind just that quick. Now, me, I need to start on Monday morning for Sunday's sermon, and I need to keep good notes about what the Lord shows me. I don't have that kind of mind. Now Spurgeon was a man that had true understanding of that knowledge but there are people who don't know the Lord that can have the knowledge, so we need true knowledge but he says you need more than that, you need wisdom, which is the proper use of knowledge; an understanding which is comprehending how it works in your life.

So as we talk about the full and accurate knowledge of Christ and his will, I reflected back on my life. I had been a Christian maybe six months, eight or nine months, and I

was attending First Baptist Church of Lawrenceburg, TN. I hadn't yet transferred down to the University of North Alabama so I hadn't found this church yet. Anyway, we had a pastor by the name of Charles Dinkins and he was a good man and taught the truth and loved the Lord and his heart was passionate and we had a college fellowship after church on Sundays and we went over to a person's house, I remember the house, I don't remember whose house but I remember seeing the house, and I remember him sharing what I'm about to share with you. It revolutionized my life. It's very basic. It may be repetitive for some of you but I want to share it again.

You need to understand, first of all, the person of Christ or who Christ is. You need to know who he is. He's God Incarnate. He's not just a messenger sent from God, he's God. He's not a plan of salvation, he's the man of salvation. He's God in human form who came to the earth and walked among us and became one of us. Though he denied himself many of his divine prerogatives, he did not remove any of his deity. Fully God but fully man. You've heard me say it many many times. The theologians use the phrase, "He's the God-man." Jesus is 100% God as if he were not man at all, and at the same time he's 100% man as if he were not God at all. He is God Incarnate.

Now that's important in our day when we have so many cults and so many groups that will come knocking on your door like the Mormons or the Jehovah's Witnesses, and one thing that's almost always consistent, as a matter of fact, I don't know if I know of any exceptions, all of those groups if you get down to brass tacks with them, they bring Jesus down below God. They bring Jesus down. It's important that you have that knowledge right. They'll say, "Now you know Jesus was the Savior and Jesus was sent from God but he's different than God the Father," and what they mean different, they don't mean they are two separate persons of one Godhead, what they mean is he's lesser. And actually the Mormons teach that one day if you do just right and maybe go out to the Mormon temple and get married to somebody, you can one day have your own planet and your own wife and she'll be pregnant for eternity. Amen, ladies. Hallelujah. Is that heaven to you? You'll just have babies and you'll populate your own planet and you'll be like Jesus, a little god of your own planet.

All of these groups, the Jehovah's Witnesses, I like to call them Jehovah's False Witnesses, who teach that there's Jehovah and then Jesus, and every time I see them, I know some of these people, I know them personally, and I saw one in the parking lot the other day and they knew that we had been going back and forth through the years about doctrine and things, and this lady was getting in her car and she said, "Well, hey Brother Jeff, how are you doing?" I said, "I'm doing fine. How are you doing?" She said, "I'm still serving Jehovah." I said, "I am too and his name is Jesus." She just shook her head and got in the car.

Well, it's important that we hold to that doctrine. Do you know there was a day about the third century after the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, when the majority of the church as an intellectual conviction were beginning to deny the deity of Jesus Christ and there was a group of men who stood in the gap and would not budge and kept bringing it up and they were in a small minority, and kept standing and kept insisting, "We've got to

hold to this doctrine," and actually they won the day and the organized church turned back to the sacred biblical doctrine that he is God Incarnate. Totally and fully God. John 1:14 says, "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us."

Well, we need the true knowledge, the full and accurate knowledge of who he is, and there's a lot more we could say but I'll suffice it for what I've said already, but secondly, we need to know what he's done. Now here's the specific part of what Charles Dinkins, my pastor of 31 years ago, told me about salvation. Now here I am, I'm a new believer and things aren't adding up in my mind. I was taught that once you're saved, you're always saved, the eternal security of the believer and I basically grasped it but I just thought, "How can that be?" I hadn't been saved long enough to know that I still stumbled and failed and sinned and I didn't know how all that worked, and Charles Dinkins laid it out for me. He said, "Well, first of all, when you receive Christ as your Savior, number 1, you're saved forever from the penalty of sin. Have you heard that before? You're not going to go to hell. The penalty, the eternal punishment has been taken. It is done. It's over. Christ vicariously took your place at the judgment when He died on the cross and since He's God, He's our Savior for time and eternity all at one time." That's what he did, he's freed me from the penalty of sin forever and, boy, my ears were perking up as he was explaining this. Secondly he said, "Not only that, He is now continuing to save you from the power of sin in daily life." The moment you're saved, Christ comes to live in you and he works in you in what we'd call progressive sanctification to progressively save you from the power of sin in daily life.

Now how many of you are all the way through with that, sin has absolutely no power over you whatsoever, you haven't sinned in a long long time? Raise your hand. Well, that's what I thought, but that doesn't mean you're not saved because you are being saved. There are things that probably were in your life before conversion, and after God saved you, those things started losing their power, they started losing their control and you walked out of those things. I know that's true in my own life. And then for God to humble us and just show us what we are, every now and then something will creep up that hadn't been a problem for years and years and wham, you'll dishonor God in an area. Do you know what God allows that to happen for? Just to show you what you are. He's showing you again that's how strong you are. That's what you can do. And we have to humble ourselves afresh and anew.

But we know that we're God's children because of that progressive sanctification. He is now saving me. I can tell you one way he's saving you from the power of sin, you're sitting in here on Sunday night. Before God saved you, you probably wouldn't be here. Now maybe you had the discipline in your life or maybe mom and dad made you go, but I would say the good part of you have something in you that desires to hear the word of God on Sunday night. That's because he saved you from wasting another 1 ½ hours of your time. You see, he's progressively saving you from the power of sin.

Well, Dr. Dinkins was telling me these things and I thought, "Now this is starting to make sense. I'm beginning to understand what all salvation is." Then he said one day God's going to finally and in an ultimate sense save you from the presence of sin. Now there are

two parts to this. This old flesh package that you and I walk around in down here, the Bible calls it the old man. I still like the word the old nature. Some people just get all upset when I use that phrase, but it's just a word. Get the principle, it's just a word. The old flesh package that we live, you see, there's a new true you that came in the day you were saved. You were born with new life. That's the new man, but the old you is this old flesh package you walk around in and he still works on you and wars with you. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, the Bible says and the Spirit against the flesh so that you may not do what you please. I no longer even desire to do what the old desires desire to do. Did you get that? I don't desire to do what my old desires desire to do. There's a new man in me that doesn't like the old man's desires. Well, one day when I get in heaven, this flesh package is going to be taken off. It's not going to be just cleansed, it's going to be removed and I get a new glorified body and from that point on, we're for all eternity totally and completely all of my heart, all of my desires, and all of my behaviors will be pleasing to God.

I'll be freed from the presence of sin in this old body but also I'll be freed from the presence of sin all around me. Heaven will have no sin in it. There will be no rebellion. Can you imagine, now just try to imagine for a moment a place where everybody not with this feigned obedience and this hypocrisy that we see so often in professing Christendom today, but everybody from the depths of their souls will love, treasure, joy in and honor Jesus Christ. One day we'll be saved from the presence of sin. You need to know that. That's sound doctrine. Those are the type things that the Apostle Paul said, "From the moment I heard of this new church in Colossae, these new believers, I have been, 'O God, help them to grasp the true knowledge, the true and accurate knowledge of who Christ is and how He has saved us.'"

Well, one other thing I would add to that, and obviously we could talk for many many hours about the full and accurate knowledge of God's will for us in Jesus Christ, but the third thing I would say, not only who is he, his person, and what he's done, his work, but thirdly, how we are complete in him. If you go back up to verse 2, we have that phrase that you see over and over and over again in the Bible and especially in the epistles of the Apostle Paul, and that is the phrase, "to the saints and faithful brethren who are in Christ." The moment you're saved, you are in Christ. Now Christ is in you but it's wonderfully true and essentially important that you are in Christ. Now that's a mystery we can't quite get our logical, tangible, concrete minds around that. It's a spiritual truth. You're in Christ. Now listen to me: the totality of your life from now and forever is in Christ.

Now since you're in Christ, you are now as complete as Christ is complete. Since you are in Christ, you're now as perfect as Christ is perfect. And as I love to tell you over and over again, since you are in Christ, you have the righteousness not just of what Adam had before he sinned in the garden of Eden, you now have the righteousness of Christ. You're so complete.

Now, you see, that was so important because – listen to me, friend – when they knock on your door and they say, "We want to tell you about the ways of God and you've got to do

this and you've got to do that, and you should stop this, and don't drink caffeine, and dadadadada," do you know what you need to do? You need to think, "Wait a minute, I've got some knowledge, some true and accurate knowledge. I'm in Christ. Now what do you have better than Him? What kind of hoop jumps and motions and rules and laws and sacraments and ceremonies or whatever, what do you want me to join? How can you beat Him?"

I told you some time ago when some of the Mormons had come to my door and we stood there and probably for 15 minutes as they talked, I'd say, "Wait a minute, you've got to stop. You're telling me I need to do this, and then I ought to do that, and I ought to do this." Then I said, "Do you not understand how vile and wicked I am? Do you not understand I am totally depraved and bankrupt? Anything I do would come from that rotten filthiness. There's nothing I can add on, there's nothing I can perform that's not tainted and corrupted and polluted by the wicked vileness of my heart. If you don't come to me with total and complete grace, I'm sunk!" Those guys just looked at me. They honestly could not respond and finally they took their paraphernalia and left. I wanted them to know that you can't come to a wretched, ruined, doomed and damned and hopeless and weak sinner and say, "Do this and do that." You'll have to come to me with full grace or I'm done for. Amen? We need that knowledge, don't we? We need that knowledge, we are in Christ, we are complete in him.

So the Apostle Paul writes to these new believers and says, "One thing I want you to have is understanding, real understanding of who Christ is and how He saves us and how you're complete in Him." Now let's go to the second thing and that's the word "application." Paul wants them to be reminded and wants to exhort them and stir them that this new knowledge, this understanding, always always results in a new life.

Application of these things to your walk. Look at it in verse 10, "so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God." Paul is saying that a proper understanding leads to active application. You begin to do things differently. One of the phrases that I have used and I have just never, I don't know where, I don't think I heard it but I don't know how to say it any better, and that's this: when you become a Christian, you're not perfect but the purpose and pattern of your life has changed. If you watch a man and he comes to Jesus Christ, his heart's purpose, his heart's goal, the reason he lives is no longer just the ends of this earth. It's still okay to work hard and get a good education and get good jobs, get salary raises, build a company. I wish four or five of you would build a company and pay off this debt we have. It would please me wonderfully. Nothing wrong with that, but in your heart of hearts as you're building those things and developing those things and achieving those things, something resonates in you that does not resonate in the businessman down the street and that is this heart that says, "O God, let this be for Your glory. God, show me how this can be of You. Show me how this can honor You and please You and serve You." Men, isn't that a great way to live and it's a great way to die because when that's your joy, guess what? Nobody can take it away from you. Business may go up, business may go down, but the joy can stay.

Well, our purpose changed but also the pattern of our life changed. We start applying the truths of Christianity to our lives. In other words, Paul is saying when you know God and God's will, as a new believer, you obey it. We don't just have the truth of God and the word of God to study it and analyze it but to make application to our lives. The emphasis on the walk here. Notice how he says it, verse 10, "so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord." That's what sets Christianity apart from other religions. Other religions have these four do's and these five don'ts and this ceremony and that ritual and if you dot those i's and cross those t's, then boy, I've got that done. Now I can go and do what I want.

As a matter of fact, it's very amusing to me and I'll not name the name, but there's a large group here in this area and they were in the area where I grew up who teach a works salvation and it's very common in their people to watch them, they'll find them five or eight of do's and don'ts and, boy, they're strict about those, then when they get that done, "Woo, the rest of it's mine!" But in Christianity, listen, Jesus comes in and he becomes precious to you. You begin to love him and you begin to joy in him and you begin to walk, it means the totality of your life now is affected by him and it is for him. I'm not saying perfection now, I'm just saying that's the difference. You don't just mark of three do's and five don'ts and say, "Woo, done now!" I've known people that were faithful tithers and they would have been better off never to have given a penny. Do you know why? Because it was just a work they checked off. When they put that tithe in the offering plate it wasn't, "O God, I owe You a thousand times more. I owe You my all and I joy that I can return a tithe because my walk is You now." It's not just some rules and do's and don'ts, my walk is about Christ now. He came in and he never leaves. He came in and he's Lord. He came in and he affects the totality of our lives.

I hadn't been a Christian very long and I began to listen to Dr. Jerry Falwell on his television program and I began to read a man that had a lot of influence on Jerry Falwell, Francis Schaeffer, a Christian philosopher and Evangelical, and Francis Schaeffer used to say something and he got my heart stirred. He said, "If you don't like what Jerry Falwell is doing politically, you ought to do it better." Now wait a minute, what does that mean? Here's what he meant, he meant that Christianity affects the totality of your life. When you go into the public arena, when you go into politics, when you go into business you take Christianity with you. You don't cut it off. Now this whole concept today of our elected officials have to keep their religion private is not of God. When our new governor stood up in the church and talked about the fact that, "You're my brothers and sisters if you've received Jesus Christ and the Spirit lifted your heart," he was 100% right. Now I know that's misunderstood and I can understand that you've got to be careful the way you say things but, friends, you can't turn it off and turn on Jesus Christ. True Christianity is not an off and on thing, it's on for all eternity.

So he says, "I want you to understand you get saved to begin walking in these new ways." Application into your lives. One of the things I want you to remember is we walk in Christ, that means – now listen – every moment of every day regardless, I would say the word irregardless but I understand that's not a word, regardless – listen – every moment of every day no matter what, you walk in his full forgiveness. Is that not good? I

mean, every moment of every day, you walk in full forgiveness. Now the old unconverted legalist who is full of religion will tell you, "Well, pastor, don't teach that kind of stuff, they won't live right." If Jesus is in them, that will make them live better for God than all your rules and laws can ever make them live. Amen?

You walk in full forgiveness. You can't out-sin the forgiveness of Jesus Christ. First of all, your heart doesn't want to; and secondly, he'll take you to the woodshed if he has to. You walk in full forgiveness and he takes you to the woodshed not as punishment but of chastising and disciplining as a child he loves because he knows sin is going to hurt you and his spanking he gives you won't hurt near as much as the sin will if he lets you keep on going in it. You walk in full forgiveness and full redemption. 1 Timothy 3, the Bible says, "You shall be holy as I am holy." God's people are to live out a life characterized by his holiness. To know him is to want to be like him and to live for him.

He amplifies this in verse 10 by saying that we ought to want "to please Him in all respects." Now when he says "please Him in all respects," it's what I've been talking about. He's going against the backdrop of the religions of the day and the Jewish legalist of the day. I think the Pharisees had made up 340 rules or laws you had to obey to please God, but you know, they had found ways to manipulate these laws so that they could sin. So they weren't pleasing God in every respect, they pleased God in their minds. They thought they were pleasing God by the laws and rules they had but they found ways to weave around them. For example, they had a law that said your parents' wealth was all given to God so if you took your parents' wealth, you weren't stealing from them because it was God's anyway. They had some weird and wicked even, things they did and this apostle knows that and so he says, "No, you've got to understand when you come to Christ, it's not that kind of religion," and every legalist and every works religion does that stuff, they manipulate it to promote their sin. They always do. Listen, works religion always promotes sin. It always does. The Apostle Paul said in Romans, "When you put the law, all it does is stir up the sinful passions to sin more," but he said that's not what Christianity is. It's the new totality of your life. Then he expresses it further. He says, "I want you to be bearing fruit in every good work." Involved in good works and bearing the fruit that God is in our lives and God is doing these works through us.

Now some of you may be troubled in your soul and say, "Well, Brother Jeff, I don't know that in my workplace or even in my family or in some environments, I've been the best witness that I ought to be." Well, if you're walking in his full forgiveness, but it is right to confess your sins to him and he's faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness, but you're going to have to learn that you can look that lost coworker in the eye and say, "You know, what I just did last Thursday or what I said yesterday wasn't pleasing to the Lord and I'm a Christian and I'm ashamed and I want to ask you to forgive me. That wasn't the witness I should have been." Do you know what? God will honor that. Do you know what that right there is? That's normal Christianity. That's just normal Christianity. If you work around somebody very long, you're going to blow it but at least you can be humble and say, "I wasn't pleasing to the Lord and I want to ask your forgiveness for that." That's a good way to be pleasing to him in all respects.

Well, Paul is telling us here, summarizing that a proper understanding, that was I., leads to proper conduct, to application in our lives. Now conversely, obedience or application will lead to fuller knowledge. Now I hope you got that. When you understand the things of the Lord, as a true believer it begins to affect your lifestyle, but the more you obey him in your lifestyle, the greater knowledge and understanding you have of truth, and that's why some people don't grow very much. They've kind of gotten in a rut and they're not living dynamically to purpose to honor God in their lifestyles and they're not gaining any new truth, and that's why I say all theology is local church theology because the church is the centerpiece of God's work on earth, and if you're not actively obeying the word of God and living out the word of God and ministering in the local church, then you are not opening up your heart and mind to further and deeper truths about God because God's not just going to give you knowledge to have it in your head, he gives you knowledge to bless his body, the church, and it's a reciprocal relationship.

Well, number 3, III., a third thing the Apostle Paul says here that's something every Christian should have and that's perseverance. Perseverance. Now we've touched all over the edge of this anyway, but look at verse 11. He says, "strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously." I'm picking up the word "steadfastness" and that has the idea of keeping on in perseverance. All of our Baptist forefathers, let me check that, the great majority of our Baptist forefathers who were theologians and writers used the phrase, "the perseverance of the saints." They did not use the phrase, "the eternal security of the believer." They did not use the phrase, "once saved, always saved." They used the richer biblical phrase, the healthier spiritual phrase of "the perseverance of the saints," and that is, if you're truly saved, you're a saint, and you will persevere. You may stumble and you may fall but you don't stay down long, you repent and get back on the track of perseverance.

So when somebody says to you in a deriding spirit, "Oh, y'all Baptists, y'all believe in once saved, always saved." You say, "Well, that's one way to put it but it's better to say we believe in the perseverance of the saints." If you're really saved, you look like a Christian and you persevere on looking like a Christian. Brothers and sisters, these 10 million Southern Baptists that are on our church rolls, and that's not an exaggerated number, that's a factual number, and these untold millions of Methodists and Presbyterians and whoever else you want to mention, you know, the great great majority of churches don't update their rolls like we try to do every year, and all these people on the rolls, so many of them have been told that because when they were in vacation Bible school, they went to the front and asked Jesus to save them, and they've been told that when they were in a youth camp or youth meeting, they checked a card and raised their hand that they asked Jesus to save them, or they've been told by an evangelist or preacher, "Well, if you prayed and asked Jesus to save you, then that's it. You're saved forever. It's done." Well, that's not wrong except it becomes wrong because it's so incomplete. The Bible teaches, yes, simple faith saves you, but the simple faith that saves you has a finished product coming out of it. Adrian Rogers used to say the faith that fizzled at the finish was faulty at the first.

Listen, if there has been no more working of God's Spirit to persevere you through this life that you dropped out of church and show up maybe twice a year for 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 20 years, but you're going back to, "Well, when I was a child I went to vacation Bible school and I asked Jesus to save me," I'm telling you, you are lost. You are undone. You are condemned before a holy God. I have not one biblical shred to give you to assure you in any way, shape or fashion. Listen to me, listen, listen: perseverance is the assurance of salvation. Did you hear that? The fact that the Spirit of God doesn't leave me alone, the fact that when I lay out of church I'm troubled about it, the fact that when I don't serve in my small group something stirs me and says I ought to help those sisters in there, I ought to be serving the Lord in there, the fact that if I slack off of my tithe and offering something convicts me, the fact that when the preacher preaches the word of God there is something in me that even if I disagree with it, something in me says, "Amen, that's right." I call it the amen of the Holy Spirit. That persevering affect in your heart is your assurance of salvation. Now, yes, it started in a moment when you may have checked a card and you may have raised your hand and you may have walked down the front and that's fine, but I think we put too much emphasis on it because that's what people are looking at instead of what the Bible says to look at. It is simple faith but it's simple faith that has a lasting effect.

So he says, "I want you to go on in steadfastness." Now he has a phrase here that is very very rich. Look at it there in verse 11, "strengthened with all power," what kind of power, Paul? Here he goes, "according to His glorious might." You can say, "according to the might of His glory." Oh, there is so much here and I can't get my mind around it but I think I can give us something about it. What is the might of his glory? You see, he is mighty not in what he has, he is mighty because of who he is. It's holy might because he's the holy God. It's not just a strength, it's holy strength. It's glorious power you have. You're not just empowered, this isn't just another form of superstitious religion like the people in the darkness of Africa who go to the witch doctor and then chant out mantras and try to get power and effects into their life to heal things or bless things. This is not that kind of false, demonic, earthly. This is holy power.

You have been infused with God's holy power and it's a power that is beyond. I thought what's a parallel here? There are things that are powerful like, let's say, a 1930 steam locomotive. My granddaddy ran steam engines and I remember he loved to watch steam locomotives because that's just something he did all of his life. Have you ever heard those things? Boy, they're kind of uneven. They have an uneven lick to them. They're not the most polished and smooth or synchronized sounding machines but they have some power.

Well, Jesus isn't like an old steam locomotive, he's like the most advanced and modern jet engine. It's powerful and it's smooth and it's synchronized and it's directed, but even infinitely better than that. You have the power of his glory, the power of his holiness dwelling within you. You see, our perseverance is fueled by his mighty holy power. Here's what that means. When you face a trial, you don't just have some kind of strength, you don't just have the consolation of friends, you don't just have the encouragement of

family, you have holy power to get you through that trial. When you go through a sorrow, you don't just have the help of those around you, you have a holy power.

That's what he's saying here. He said, "I want you to grasp what's in you." When you're persecuted for believing the truth of God and you live in a day where if you hold to the great orthodox truths of God and the church, you're going to be mocked and laughed at by professing Christians everywhere, but when you persevere and stay strong, you can persevere, Paul is saying, because you have holy power within you. When you face sufferings or when you are tempted to be allured by the false teachers of this world that coddle your flesh, you can stand against it in his mighty power. His glorious strength enables us to do one of two things: either to repel what's coming against us or endure through it, but his holy power will get you through it.

"Pastor, I don't know how I'm going to make it through this situation I'm in." I don't know how you're going to make it either but I know how he'll get you through it, it's his holy power, and you'd better yield up to him and say, "Now Lord, these people are wrong, the things they're saying are wrong, what's happening to me is not just, but whatever You're doing in me, Lord, let me get all of it."

I was talking to a brother just recently and dealing with some health issues and they're discouraging and I said, "Well, brother, we're going to pray God heals you and let's get the best doctors we can find, but let's also pray that you squeeze all the sanctification out of it you can." God's doing something in you, he's going to either enable you to repel it or endure through it but you can remain steadfast in perseverance in his mighty power.

Well, the last thing, IV. I could have sworn I had a watch at one time. Did y'all see what I did with it? Huh? Oh, it's down there? What time is it? 10 till? 10 after, okay, thank you.

IV. The fourth thing every Christian should have, thanksgiving, gratitude. Now isn't that basic but so needed. The Apostle Paul says as we look at verse 12, "giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light." Then he goes on to some other things.

Let me just categorize it with these last three verses, these three ways. First of all, he says, "I want you to be thankful to God that He's made you qualified." He's made you to be qualified. Look at it there in verse 12, "giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light." Now the word "qualified" means that it's settled, it's finished, there's nothing else to do. You are now a qualified member of the saints of light. That's who you are and Jesus did that.

Now when we say qualified, first of all, you're qualified as a saint of light which means you are one who is truthfully or truly qualified in God's eyes. The light speaks of truth, so in the truest – now listen now – in the truest ideals of the Godhead, in the truest convictions and conclusions of infinite holy God, you qualify as a saint before him. That's what he's saying.

Now you can go to a lot of people down here on earth and they'll pat you, "Bless your heart, son, you're doing good." No, you're not doing good. You're not doing good until Jesus qualifies you before a holy God. A lot of people will tell you you're doing alright, you're doing good, but you're not doing good until you know Jesus has saved you so you're qualified in the highest definition of truth and righteousness. Jesus makes us qualified.

Well, not only does a saint of light, light emphasizes truth, it also represents purity. In other words, you're qualified according to the high standards of holy purity to stand before a holy God. Now that's something to be thankful for.

Well, secondly, not only has he made me qualified, he has made me family. I love the familial tenderness and sweetness of the way our Lord takes it out of the judicial realm which is so very important, don't misunderstand me, it reminds us over and over of how we are precious children and part of the family. Notice how he words it there, "He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son." It's the connotation of family, of sonship, of oneness with the sweet and precious heavenly Father.

This transferring now, transferring you out of the domain of darkness into the kingdom of his beloved Son is a picture of the exodus. God took the Jews out of Egypt and took them into the Promised Land and that's the picture here, it's the Lord through the provision of his Son Jesus Christ has taken you out of one setting and he's placed you into the family of God, the kingdom of his beloved Son. You see, God's love rests on the kingdom of his Son. Satan's kingdom grinds in darkness and that's what you had and now you are a member of the kingdom of the beloved Son. The harsh rule of the prince of darkness has been exchanged for the wise and loving sovereignty of the family of God's Son. That's something to thank God for.

Well, thirdly, thank him that he has forgiven you. Look at verse 14, "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." Now that old word "redemption" actually was a quite common word of the day. It's a word that comes from the word "ransom," and the word "ransom" is a word that speaks of the money used to purchase a slave out of the slave market and, of course, that's where we were. It's the illustration you've heard many times, we were on the slave block, belonged to the kingdom of Satan, enslaved by sin and Jesus looked at us and when Jesus looked at us, he said the truth probably, he said, "They're absolutely helpless. They're absolutely hopeless. In 100 million years of everything they could accumulate, accomplish or perform, they could never pay their way out of this predicament, but with My precious blood, I pay the ransom price and now they are My property, now they're My family." You need to remind yourself God did not save you to make you a menial slave and God did not save you to give you just a corner of heaven and that's good enough. No, he saved you to be a joint heir with his beloved Son Jesus Christ. That's something to be thankful for.

Well, he uses the word not only "redemption," he uses the word "forgiveness" here and that's the word I use in my outline, "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of

sins." That word "forgiveness" has the idea of sending away. He took our sin, the consequence of being a sinner, the punishment that ought to come on a sinner, he's just taken it away. When Jesus came up to be baptized by John the Baptist, John the Baptist looked at him and I believe in the Spirit John just could not help but cry this, probably he pointed at Jesus, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." It literally has the idea of bearing up the sin of the world.

Remember when Samson was in the city and was it the Philistines that said, "We're gonna get him at daybreak. We're gonna hide down at the city gate and when Samson leaves in the morning at daylight, we're gonna get him. We're gonna kill him." Well, Samson got word of that so Samson got up in the middle of the night and went down to the gates of the city and the Bible says he put his shoulders under gate, post, bars and all and ripped them up and Samson took them up on the mountain and threw them down. Well, that's what Jesus did with your sin and your sin burden. You were caged in and locked in and a prisoner and Jesus put his massive shoulders under it, wasn't no sweat for him, ripped it up, gate, post, bars and all, and he has thrown it down. It's been taken out of the way.

The Bible says in the Old Testament Psalm 103:12, "As far as the east is from the west," so far has he removed your transgressions from you. Micah 7:19, he has cast all of our sins into the depths of the sea. That's forgiveness. Paul says, "Every Christian ought to have thanksgiving." Understanding, application into your life, perseverance through this life and a heart and attitude of thanksgiving. How are you doing? How are you doing?