

Thanking God for Christ's Kingdom Blessings

Colossians 1:12-14

Pastor/Elder Phil Layton, GCBC, May 16, 2020

Please take the Word of our King and turn to Colossians 1. You'll notice I'm outside at church with the cross behind me. It's a beautiful day and we have a beautiful Savior who made all this. We have a lot to be thankful for out here and in here in God's Word. We had planned an Easter sunrise service out here awhile back; our plan obviously didn't happen. But He is risen! A few hours ago, this place was in darkness, but light has come, and that's the imagery of Col. 1 and resurrection we celebrate each Sunday. I am reminded how the NT church in Acts 2 began outdoors with the preaching of the cross on this month, weeks after Easter. We pray our church can begin to gather here soon. I hope our parking lot will not be empty long, but even now there's full blessings to be thankful for all around us, in creation, our great salvation

Gospel gratitude is what our next text in Colossians is about

Our world has been largely shut down in a way that is new to our lifetimes, but what's always open to sinners is the old, old story of Jesus and His love. The old rugged cross gives us hope as it visually points from earth to heaven as the way of redemption and forgiveness. The Lord's open arms stretched out on it are a visual of His love open to all. Being out in the sunlight is also a visual of our text, out from darkness, we're to thank God we're in the light

Colossians 1, v. 12: *giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.* ¹³ *He has delivered 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.*

That's our text today.

How did King Jesus do that and bring us into His kingdom? Look at 2:14: *by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.* ¹⁵ *He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them...* And so the cross broke the power of sin and Satan defeating the domain of darkness

I love how Fernando Ortega sings in 'My Redeemer...

His triumphant power I'll tell.

How the victory He gives, over sin and death and hell

I will sing of my Redeemer, And His wondrous love to me;

On the cruel cross he suffered, From the curse to set me free

Sing, oh sing of my Redeemer, With his blood, he purchased me

On the cross, he sealed my pardon, Paid the debt, and made me free'¹

That's what Col 1:14 is saying, in Christ we have redemption through His blood, the payment and pardon of our sins. The cross reminds us the gates of Hades cannot prevail against the church that Christ builds. No rulers or authorities can stop the power of the cross and the gospel from going forth.

This is my Father's world and believers are in the kingdom of His beloved Son our King. He is risen and reigning. Colossians is about the preeminence of Christ over all. 1:15-19 will really bring that home in our next section, in everything Christ has supremacy.

Before Paul talks about His sovereignty over creation (next text), v. 12-14 starts with His sovereignty over salvation. **You ask 'didn't I have a part in salvation?' Yes: your part was sin you need forgiveness from. Our part was needing rescue. We all were in darkness and slavery needing to be redeemed, delivered, transferred. Our response: thanks**

Idea: Thanking God for Christ's Kingdom Blessings (glories of salvation)

- 1. Thank God for Christ's inheritance (v. 12)**
- 2. Thank God for Christ's deliverance (v. 13a)**
- 3. Thank God for Christ's kingdom (v. 13b)**
- 4. Thank God for Christ's redemption (v. 14)**

First, Thank God for Christ's inheritance (v. 12)

Notice v. 11 ends with '*all patience with joy, giving thanks...*' There's a connection with joy and thankfulness. If it's hard for you be patient with joy, are you giving thanks? The path to joy is thanksgiving. You may not feel thankful, but give thanks. Pray for others, and follow Paul's pattern starting with thanks. ³ *We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you...*

That's not just a comment on Paul's prayer life, it's a command for ours. If you turn to Col 4:2 God's Word tells you and me: *Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving* [present active participle, i.e., keep on giving thanks as a habit and pattern of life, not just when you thank God for your food, but continue throughout the day, giving thanks to God]

Go back to Col 3:15, and just look at the end of the verse: *And be thankful.* v. 16 tells us songs and scriptures can help, end of v. 16: *with thankfulness in your hearts to God.* ¹⁷ *And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father...*

So giving thanks in all we do all the time, being thankful, and singing to stir thankfulness, like 'Thank you, Oh my Father, for giving us your Son...'

A heart of gratitude is the vein that runs through our body to give life

God's Word keeps repeating this because God's Word wants us to get this! I've needed this. I've been convicted and preaching this to myself first and trying to practice it.

As a father of sons and daughters, and a husband, I see I've taken for granted and I needed to take time this week for gratitude to them and God. I had to step back, slow down, for me, put my phone down!

My family and schooling I can't put on the back burner or get burnt out by different fires here and there. That is my #1 prayer request to balance home ministry and to be 'all in' and not miss this time that's a gift. Our lives are in an important time, all my loved ones are, and so are yours. I'm thankful I have a patient wife and incredible kids and have been blessed in recent days and weeks to have more talks, long walks, rides, games, even tent with boys.

Paul in Col 1:12 thanks his Father not just for family interaction but for the family inheritance he has. God's only begotten Son is the only rightful heir to the inheritance, but God qualifies saints (that's believers) to share in it.

As sinners we're unqualified and unworthy, but God has qualified us in His worthy beloved Son. The word **share** in v. 12 meant having a part, taking part, or participation in the benefits. Think of a rich man's will and deed being read and you find out you got a share in the inheritance like his son!

Eph 1:3 *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ... [it says He chose and adopted us, v. 13 adds] And you also were included in Christ when you heard...the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance...[v. 18 goes on] I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints² ...*

Milton Vincent's Gospel Primer has a poem to preach this truth to yourself:

A child of the Father He made me to be, And gave me the Spirit as His guarantee
That being God's child, I will one day obtain, A heavenly treasure that never will wane
...So this is my story; ongoing it is. How shall I thank God for this gospel of His?
A gift that keeps giving, the gospel confers, The bounty of heaven each time I rehearse.
Deserve it? I don't on my holiest day; But this is salvation, and herein I'll stay³

Application: let your light shine, live like an heir. Eph 5:8: *for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. **Walk as children of light** (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true)...*

So when Paul talks about our heritage of light, it's what's good, right, true. It's not just a heavenly inheritance for the future, we're to live in light of it.

Phil 2:14 *'Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may... shine like stars in the universe...'* What shines isn't complaints, it's thanks.

#1. Thank God for Christ's Inheritance in the Light (and live in light of it)

#2. Thank God for Christ's Deliverance from the Darkness

Look at Col 1:13: '*He has delivered us from the domain of darkness...*'

Someone wrote me: 'My favorite book has always been the same as your favorite, Colossians, what a coincidence. So, that made me very excited to hear of you preaching through our favorite book. I hope you do the real slow version. You know, the version where you only get through a verse or two each week ☺ My life verse is Col. 1:13 "For he delivered (me) from the domain of darkness and transferred (me) to the kingdom of His beloved Son," It is not that complicated as this verse describes. God made it so!'

Actually I think I'll get through 3 verses this week, but we could do weeks in just this verse and not exhaust it. If you have a favorite in Colossians, let me know. If not a life verse, there's verses here than can change your life. This is a place to slow down, not just verse-by-verse, but **word-by-word**:

HE – God the Father, His doing, not ours, God alone delivered us

HAS – Past tense, this happened at a point in time, our delivery. Like a baby being delivered by a physician, we were born again.

DELIVERED – '*rescued*' is what the NASB has. Think of a search and rescue operation, from the most desperate and dark situation.

FROM THE DOMAIN – '*dominion/power of darkness*' (NIV/NKJV) Scholars say it's 'the rule of a despot who has usurped power. It means realm ... jurisdiction, [even] tyranny. It is parallel to kingdom and indicates that the darkness is not a mere state but it has authority and is active. It means power over people...bondage to the evil...' ⁴

DARKNESS - 'is used in conjunction with Satan...sin, falsehood, ignorance...' ⁵ John 3 says men love the darkness. ⁶ 1 John 5:19 '*the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.*' That's the unbelieving world, but 1 John 1:7 tells believers to '*walk in the light.*' That's the contrast between Col 1:13 and 1:12 (saints in the light, not darkness)

Seth or other missions illustration?

Whether we're faraway pagans or "moral" Americans, deliverance is what we needed. '*God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*' That's 2 Cor 4:6 and that's sovereign grace, creating light.

Application: Proclaim the glories of your Deliverer. 1 Pet 2:9 *'proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light...Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify... Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king... or to governors...'*⁷

Our governor and godless people around us are watching how Christians are responding (and re-posting on social media). Don't slander Gentiles or give cause to slander us, let's not act like the darkness, let's behave excellently and proclaim the excellencies of Jesus who called us out of darkness, amen?

Paul's own conversion story, he was in spiritual darkness as he persecuted the church till light shone on the Damascus road. The darkness of blindness for 3 days was Paul's experience until the scales fell off to new life in Jesus.

Listen to **Paul's testimony** of his conversion and commission⁸ from Acts 26:
*"at midday...I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun...And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice... 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?'... [He went on] I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting... I will **deliver** you... I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to **turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance...** [words, concepts in Col 1] *that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.**

GIVE GOSPEL HERE

Let's pray for our nation and nations in darkness that the gospel will shine.

We've a story to tell to the nations, that shall turn their hearts to the right,
 a story of truth and mercy, a story of peace and light...
 For the darkness shall turn to dawning, and the dawning to noonday bright,
 and Christ's great kingdom shall come on earth, the kingdom of love and light.⁹

That takes us to 3rd point and part: Thank God for Christ's kingdom

Middle of v. 13: *'...and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son'*

TRANSFERRED – some translations have 'bring safe' – think prisoners being transported to a place of freedom, POWs brought safely home to US, or hostages or refugees rescued and brought from an oppressive dictatorship to the land of the free. In ancient times this word 'was used of kings who took people from [one] country and transplanted them in another country.'¹⁰ I shared with you last year the testimony of a Jewish concentration camp survivor who was transferred by boat to NY, the statue of liberty and the big buildings and blessings of this nation and was so thankful for new freedoms. I think of Marcia Burnham's testimony shared at our church of her rescue from Islamic terrorists in Philippine jungle and her transport back to the US.

Hendriksen: He brought us out of the dark and dismal realm of false ideas... into the sun-bathed land of clear knowledge... out of the bewildering sphere of perverted cravings and selfish [desires] into the blissful realm of holy yearnings and self-denials; out of the miserable dungeon of...bonds and heart-rending cries into the magnificent palace of...liberty and joyful song¹¹

2 Cor 5:17 says salvation is a new creation, where all things become new.

Illustration: Pevensie children hiding in the dark wardrobe but it transports and transfers them to the kingdom of Aslan, the Lion and Son of the great Emperor Beyond the Sea. It's a whole new domain from old England, and there's still evil in this realm, but Aslan is their king and will win in the end.

They were already in his kingdom, but not all in it recognized his rule yet. Lucy had been nervous earlier, but when she saw the lion rise from the dead and heard his voice roar, she had security and confidence in him, on him. As he went into the battle against the evil Jadis, she clung tight to Aslan's mane

In a greater way, King Jesus is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah who conquers. As we cling to Him, He carries us on His shoulders to victory. His prophecy and power brings us into His Kingdom. Sons of Adam and daughters of Eve were hiding in the darkness of our old life, but we were transferred to a new realm. It's impossible, but He brings to life us who were as dead as a stone statue. He breathes life in us. Col 2 says when we were dead He made alive.

We're now in His kingdom and one day all will recognize Christ's kingship. Every knee will bow in the end. As we bow in faith, we enter His kingdom. This is the kingdom-now / not-yet tension, a present reality / future finality. In some sense it's inaugurated now but will be consummated at 2nd coming. Jesus taught the kingdom is within you, here Paul says we're transferred in His kingdom now at salvation spiritually till the kingdom to come eternally.

We are citizens of heaven. The world can't see it till His kingdom comes on earth as it is in heaven. But to put it simply, you're in Christ's kingdom if He's your king. A kid's song talks about the flag in the castle of my heart to show the King is in residence there. Let it fly in the sky, let the world know

Col 3 says set your affections (heart/mind) above, where Jesus is enthroned.

We sing at Christmas *'the King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone Him, This, this is Christ the King...'*

¹² And this is His message: *'the kingdom...is at hand, repent and believe the gospel'* (Mk 1:15).

Mt 24:12 'this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations...'. Acts 28 says Paul from a Roman prison was 'testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus... proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.'¹³

That's the context when Paul wrote Colossians, as he was on lockdown, the gospel of the kingdom went out freely and more widely than ever, unchained, unrestrained. Some translations say it went out with 'freedom / openness / without restriction.'

Thank the Lord for His unstoppable gospel that goes out even if you can't!

That takes us to 4th final point: Thank God for Christ's redemption

¹⁴ *in whom [Christ from v. 13] we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

Forgiveness is the freeing or releasing of a debt owed, as the Lord's prayer asks 'forgive us our _____...' The wages of sin is death, that's what's owed to sinners, physical and eternal death is what we've earned and deserve for our crimes against God. We had a debt we could not pay and our Redeemer paid a debt He did not owe, paying in full for sins of believers on the cross.

What's the application for us who have forgiveness of sins in the Beloved? Look at Col 3:12 where we're actually called beloved, just like God's Son.

¹² *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,* ¹³ *bearing with one another and, **if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.***

The forgiven must be forgiving. We pray daily 'forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.'

Col 1:14 says we *have redemption, the forgiveness of sin*. Redemption is paying the price to buy back from the slave market of sin. It's emancipation and it's also a new relation. In the Greek-Roman world some redeemed and adopted as a son they wanted to make their heir (several emperors and kings did that, including Julius Caesar, Augustus, etc.). Ben Hur is a story of that. Col 1:13-14 is redemption from a dungeon of darkness to the son's kingdom.

Those who believe receive the right to be called children of God, Jn 1 says.

Eph 1 says the Father '*predestined us to adoption as sons...to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted **in the Beloved.***

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins...'

I once was an out-cast stranger on earth, A sinner by choice, and an alien by birth;
But I've been adopted, my name's written down,
An heir of salvation, the kingdom and crown. I'm a child of the King¹⁴

We're not just transferred into a community, we're transferred into a family.

John 8: *everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin* [but that's where Jesus said] *the truth will set you _____ ... if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed (v. 31-36)*.

The gospel truth redeems and sets free slaves of sin. The beloved Son sets believers free so we're free indeed, the freedom of sons.

This is God's beloved Son in whom He's well pleased, we're now in Him!

Gal 4:4 '*God sent forth his Son...to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons...So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir...*' (that's the inheritance of Col 1:12).

So we sing 'redeemed through His infinite mercy, His child forever I am!'

In Romans 8, God takes these slaves He has chosen and pre-determined to adopt, as Ephesians says, and He turns them from fear to fatherly intimacy, from slaves to sons, from hell-bound to heavenly heirs. Even sinners who cried out 'crucify Him' He forgave and gave the Spirit to now cry out *Abba!*

How should we respond? Thank you Oh my father for giving me your Son!

God so loved the world He gave His beloved Son for an orphan lost and poor as I,
He redeemed me 'and welcomed me to His family on high...
I've been adopted By the King of all kings, I'm an heir to His heavenly throne,
Once a slave to sin Now a child of God...adopted And I'm one of His own'¹⁵

¹ Fernando Ortega, "My Redeemer."

² NIV.

³ Milton Vincent, *A Gospel Primer for Christians: Learning to See the Glories of Christ's Love*, p. 82, 88.

⁴ Martha King, *Exegetical Summary of Colossians* (Dallas, SIL: 1998), p. 42.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ John 3:19.

⁷ NASB.

⁸ NKJV.

⁹ H. Ernest Nichol, "We've a Story to Tell to the Nations."

¹⁰ King, p. 43.

¹¹ William Hendriksen, *Colossians*, p. 63.

¹² William Dix, "What Child is This."

¹³ v. 23, 31.

¹⁴ Harriet Buell, "A Child of the King."

¹⁵ "I've Been Adopted," by Stephen R. Adams, 1972, CCLI Song No. 816303.