

How Redemption Fuels the Christian Life

Colossians 1:11-14

Discussion 1: Thankfulness

- *Brief review of last two week's teachings on thankfulness*
 - What Paul gives thanks for--the Colossian church
 - The Need for Thankful Prayer (3)
 - Thankful for Faith, Love, Hope, the Gospel, Gospel Growth, and Gospel Messengers (3-4)
 - What Paul asks God for--the Church
 - Consistency
 - For understanding God's will, truth, and reasons for thanksgiving
 - For Fruit of the Spirit & Harvest of Souls
 - For Strength (endurance, patience, personal/community transformation)
- *Thankfulness in the believer--Review/discuss its effects*
 - "Walking worthy" is central (grammatically...)
 - Giving thanks *fuels* strength, endurance, patience, and joy
 - Not just quick thanks/formality/politeness to God

"We need descriptive, prolonged thanksgiving for the gospel in order to be strengthened, patient and happy like Paul talks about here."
- *How's your prayer life?* [Hopefully growing... Leaders--lead out in confession and repentance]

Discussion 2: Thankfulness for ...

Praying the Scriptures is a wonderful practice, not to mention a great source of ... Scriptural prayers when your "what to pray" well runs dry.

This is a good opportunity to practice it as a group.

Some guiding principles:

- Couch it in thankful language ("thankify" it)
- Personalize and pluralize it. ("we-ify" it)
- Don't worry about being smooth or about pauses to think about how to say it.
- Don't be afraid of putting it in your own words, supplementing it with quotations from other Scriptures, or expanding on your thankfulness.
- *This is prayer, not public speaking...*

1. Being qualified (12) -- Pray Psalm 24:3-4;9-10

[sample: (read 3-4)--Lord we thank you and are in awe of our perfect Savior Jesus Christ our Lord whom you sent who *is* able to ascend the hill of the LORD and stand in the holy place, ... always perfect and true... the King of glory and LORD of hosts]

2. Inheritance (12) -- Pray Ephesians 1:13-14; 2:11-22; 3:6

3. Sainthood (12) -- Pray 1 Cor 1:2 and John 10:27

[For God's sovereign calling of the saints... for granting us to hear his voice ...]

4. Realm transfer (13) -- Pray Eze 16:4-11 and Eph 2:1-7; Phil 3:20

[Eze 16 excerpts as in sermon are fine... "though we were dead in sin, while we were yet sinners our citizenship in heaven...]

5. Redemption (14) --Pray Exodus 6:6; Heb 9:11-12; 1 Cor 5:7; Eph 1:7-8

6. Forgiveness (14) --Pray thanks for God's scandalous grace in forgiving our sins this way:

Isaiah 43:25 *I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins. Isaiah 38:17* ...you have cast all my sins behind your back.**Psalm 103:12** *as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. Micah 7:18-19* *Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love. ... You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.*

****Summary of God's work of salvation:--In grateful awe, pray Rom 8:28-30**

[Begins with a verse many know--continues with verses we should all know: *The Golden Chain of Redemption*. If you are on a roll, by all means continue into the following verses... they are awe inspiring as well.]

Discussion 3: Pray for Needs of the body

- Randy Dunn -- *Post operative spinal cord shock--loss of feeling and use of legs. For healing, encouragement, and ability to return to work.*
- Heidi and Jay Swensen and family--*Breast cancer that has spread. Healing, relief of significant pain, able to go home with family to continue treatment.*
- Luke Brown (Sheffen & Rachael's child) *open heart surgery to repair holes*
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add needs for your CG here (sign up for prayer force emails here: dscprayerforce@gmail.com)

Discussion 4: Pray for our Deacons

- Doug Shawn, Dan Moore, Kelly Moore are new ("Moore and Moore" blessings puns are allowed)
- Brian Hendrix, Alwyn Koil, John Ritter, Jim Tate, and Ken Wesselman continue to serve the body in this critically important ministry.

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- *How's your prayer life?*

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I. *Charting the Flow of Thought in Paul's Prayer (vs. 9-12)*

Asking... (9) *that you be filled with knowledge of his will...*(9)

so that you would... (10) *walk worthy* (10)

(5 participles - "-ing words")

- *pleasing to him* (10)
- *bearing fruit in every good work* (10)
- *increasing in the knowledge of God* (10)
- *being strengthened with all power* (11) *unto all endurance and patience with joy*
- *giving thanks* (12)

- There is a flow of thought going on (not just a random list).
- Paul is making logical connections between the good things he's praying for in the Colossian church. "*so that...*"
- But there is more. Some commentators suggest that these participles build off one another.
 - *Pleasing him* is how you *walk worthy*.
 - Bearing *fruit* is how you *please God*.
 - *Increasing in the knowledge of God* is no small part of how you'll *bear fruit*.
 - You need the Holy Spirit's *power* to *increase in knowledge* and *fruit*.
 - *giving thanks* (12) is a way in which we are *strengthened with all power, endurance, patience and joy*

Therefore:

- ✓ Giving thanks isn't just a command. It isn't just an "ought."
- ✓ Giving thanks feeds back into everything before it.
- ✓ It's a means of being strengthened.
- ✓ Giving thanks *fuels* strength, endurance, patience, and joy.
- ✓ It's how we get our endurance. It's one way that we grow our patience.
- ✓ It's how we fan the flame of our joy.

Remember: (from previous messages about *how* Paul gives thanks).

- It's not just a general spirit of thankfulness that he's after.
- The content of his thankfulness *faith, love, hope, gospel fruit, gospel growth*
- It's also not a quick thanks; it's not just a quick acknowledgement.

- When Paul gives thanks for the gospel it turns into a tornado of description/praise, as he circles about the same thing in a variety of ways.
- It's not just thankfulness in general that fuels strength, endurance, and joy, it is thankfulness for the most important thing in the world – to be savingly rescued.

It's not mere thankfulness, or quick thankfulness, for the gospel that fuels the Christian life. It is thoughtful, meditative, energetic ruminating on the different aspects of what Christ has done and what it means for us.

II. Giving Thanks -- For What? (vs. 12-14)

1. Being qualified (12)

- We all know what it means in our culture to qualify for something
- We also know what it means to be unqualified for something.
- A good company has high standards; a good school makes it hard to get into
How much more a perfectly righteous King of the Universe?!

- So who's qualified to receive God's blessings?
- Who's qualified to call on him? To praise him?
- Who's qualified to be his child?
- Who's qualified to enter in to the presence of his glory in heaven?

Psalm 24:3-4 *Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.*

Vs. 9-10 *Lift up your heads, O gates! And lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. ¹⁰ Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory!*

Jesus is qualified to enter God's presence. (v. 12 says "he qualified us")

2. Inheritance (12)

- We are "heirs" with Jesus, who is God's perfect
- He has made us sons and daughters
- We have been adopted into the family, with full rights and privileges

^{ESV} **Galatians 4:4-9** But ^awhen the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, ^bborn ^cof woman, born ^dunder the law, ⁵ ^ato redeem those who were under the law, so that we might **receive ^badoption** as sons. ⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent ^athe Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then ^aan **heir** through God. ⁸ Formerly, when you ^adid not know God, you ^bwere enslaved to those that by nature ^care not gods. ⁹ But now that you have come to know God, or rather ^ato be known by God, ^bhow can you turn back again to ^cthe weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?

- It wasn't always like that ...

^{ESV} **Ephesians 2:11-13** Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called ^athe circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands-- ¹² remember ^athat you were at that time separated from Christ, ^balienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to ^cthe covenants of promise, ^dhaving no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were ^afar off have been brought near ^bby the blood of Christ.

- The point really isn't what we inherit (though Matt. 5 tells us things like "we inherit the earth")
- The point is we have been adopted into the family and now have full rights and privileges

^{ESV} **Ephesians 1:13-14** In him you also, when you heard ^athe word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, ^bwere **sealed** with the ^cpromised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ **who is ^athe guarantee¹ of our ^binheritance until ^cwe acquire ^dpossession of it,** ² ^eto the praise of his glory.

- This right here ought to be enough biblical clarity to keep Christians from believing that true Christians can lose their salvation.

3. Sainthood (12)

- To be called a "saint" is to be called "holy"
- Every Christian is a "saint" (Present tense)
- True Christians are saints even when they are at their worst.
- We are declared to be holy because of someone else's holiness.

Jesus was not only holy for us but he also took our shame, our condemnation, our death.

- Like someone taking our significant financial debt
- And giving us billions of dollars

Justification = declaring us holy.

- **Rom 4:5** - He declares "righteous" what is in itself "wicked"

The jury has already met, has already given its verdict, it is already adjourned.

4. Realm transfer (13)

- Delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred to the Kingdom of his Son.
- The word for transfer is often used in ancient literature for when a king would take a whole population of people and move them into a new place, a new realm, a new culture. (exile)

- "Domain" = identity, behavior--We do things that wish we wouldn't do. There is a bent toward evil in us, even the best of us.
- "Darkness" = blind --We don't just do things we shouldn't do; we don't *see* things the way they truly are.

Our only hope is that God would redeemingly "conquer" us and bring us into his kingdom.

Think of Israel's beginnings...

Ezekiel 16:4-11 ...as for your birth, on the day you were born your cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to cleanse you, nor rubbed with salt, nor wrapped in swaddling cloths. ⁵ No eye pitied you, to do any of these things to you out of compassion for you, but you were cast out on the open field, for you were abhorred, on the day that you were born. ⁶ "And when I passed by you and saw you wallowing in your blood, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' ⁷ I made you flourish like a plant of the field... I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness; I made my vow to you and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Lord GOD, and you became mine.... Then I bathed you with water and washed off your blood from you and anointed you with oil. I clothed you... And I adorned you....

- God initiates.

Think of our own beginning...

Ephesians 2:1-7 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience- ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ- by grace you have been saved- ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

- Spiritual zombies--the walking dead.

We're not yet in heaven, but our domain is a heavenly one.

- Phil 3 - Heavenly citizenship
- Col 3 - set your mind on things above - you've been raised with Christ; that's where he is and where you're going.

People often say "just give me something practical. That teaching about what Jesus is and what he did is good and all, but tell me what to do." I already know what he did, but tell me what I'm now supposed to do.

- Be careful – that could be similar to the Colossian heresy – “Jesus & _____”
- The gospel is enough for us.
- Remember, Paul’s been praying for the “*gospel* to bear fruit...for the *gospel* to grow.”

Christianity is first and foremost about what Christ already did.

5. Redemption (14)

- The word “Redemption” in the Bible is rooted in the story of the Exodus
- Where the Israelites were rescued from the bondage and slavery in Egypt
 - Blood of a perfect innocent lamb spilled on the doorposts – God would “pass over” those households
 - It was a symbol of their faith;
 - It was a picture of a substitute death (some first born had to die)
- In the NT, Jesus was the True Passover

1 Cor 5:7 – Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed.

- God’s judgment “passes over” those who believe, because X has taken the judgment

Ephesians 1:7-8 *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us...*

6. Forgiveness (14)

- God’s forgiveness is described to us in Scripture in wonderfully picturesque ways:

Isaiah 43:25 *I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.*

Isaiah 38:17 *...you have cast all my sins behind your back.*

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- Don’t forget that earlier point about *thankfulness* and its key place in the Christian life
- We need a growing thankfulness for redemption in order to keep growing in the Christian life.
 - Part of how we grow in our thankfulness for the gospel is by never forgetting what we were saved from.

- We don't keep beating ourselves up for how bad we were; but we never forget how lost we are without Christ.
- If we forget it, we will subtly begin to think that perhaps he loved us because of the things we now don't do.

Jesus/Christianity is not

- "a new start"
- "turning over a new leaf"
- "getting back on track"

Christianity is

- coming to the end of yourself
 - giving up on all self ability
- Salvation results in a changed life, but no amount of changed life can remove sin
 - Salvation comes through faith...but it is not our faith that garnishes salvation

The gospel..., in the first instance, does not ask us to do anything - it is primarily an announcement of what God has done for us.... The work of the devil is to twist it, to pervert it...to prevent us from seeing it..., [to tell us] that the message of Christianity is a call to us to do something to put ourselves right, to put the world right, to stop this, to stop that! But the very first principle of Christianity denies that completely; it is the exact opposite. Christianity is an announcement and a proclamation of what God has done. Yet people still persist in thinking that Christianity is a call to them to do something. That is why they do not sing and praise God; that is why their hearts are not on fire and full of rejoicing. It is because they think Christianity is a code of ethics, a way of life and of living. No, says Paul,... he [has qualified] us; he has done it all.

D. Martin Lloyd Jones