Reasons to be Thankful

Lesson #2

Colossians 1:12-29

***“9 And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. 11 May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, 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.”***

Last week we saw the goals of Paul’ prayers and we saw those eight things about the preeminent one (Jesus Christ).

This week, we will pick up on the fifth and final goal of Paul’s prayers for the church in Colossae. It is here that Paul’s mind appears to be flooded with reasons we should be thankful and simply walks through them as he writes to the believers in Colossae.

**Vs 12** - ***Giving thanks to the Father,*** As Paul writes that, he suddenly transitions to why, we should be thankful as he compiles a listing of nine reasons we should be thankful.

**The first reason we should be thankful:**

**Point #1 - Vs 12-** The sacrifice of Jesus ***has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.***

***Qualified***, the Greek word is only used twice in the New Testament. But it means to **make sufficient**, **to empower**, **to render fit**, **to be properly equipped**.

God has qualified you and I, when on our own we were totally and absolutely disqualified.

Before God saved us by his grace, through the sacrifice of His Son, we were truly unfit, unqualified for an inheritance in heaven. Our sins had disqualified us and there was nothing we could do to make ourselves “fit” for heaven.

*“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” (Ro 3:23 ESV)*

*“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Ro 6:23 ESV)*

By God’s grace, through the sacrifice of His Son, **the unqualified**, have **been qualified *to share in the inheritance*,** the Greek word means to have a distinct part of a whole, or an individual allotment from the whole.

This is clearly an illusion to how the nation of Israel’s land inheritance was partitioned out. They received a specific piece of the overall whole.

Our inheritance is both eternal life and an eternity with God. The eternal life we receive is not simply about an **endless existence**, it is also about the **quality of that exitance**.

*“I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.” (Joh 10:28 ESV)*

*“****2*** *And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.* ***3*** *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.* ***4*** *He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."* ***5*** *And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."” (Re 21:2-5 ESV)*

Inheritance *in light* represents two things:

1. Truth

*“The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.” (Ps 119:130 ESV)*

1. Moral purity

*“8 for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), 10 and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. 11 Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret.” (Eph 5:8-12 ESV)*

**The second reason we should be thankful:**

**Point #2** – **Vs 13** – *God has delivered us from the domain of darkness.*

**Delivered** - **ῥύομαι** (*rhoo’-om-ahee)* it means to **deliver**, to **rescue**, to **draw to oneself**.

God delivered us, God rescued us, God drew us to himself, and you can now see where he drew us from….

*From the domain of darkness*, we have been delivered from the realm of Satan, from the darkness of evil. *Domain* could be translated as the **power of darkness**, **the authority of darkness**, or **the jurisdiction of darkness**. The supernatural forces of evil.

Jesus used this same phrase when they arrested him:

*“****52*** *Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs?* ***53*** *When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."* ***54*** *¶ Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest’s house, and Peter was following at a distance.” (Lu 22:52-54 ESV)*

**Side Note:** The triumph of the ***“domain of darkness”*** was short-lived for it was later that day that Jesus shattered Satan’s power by His death on the cross.

**The third reason we should be thankful:**

**Point #3 - Vs 13b –** God has*transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son*

The Greek word translated *“transferred”* is to **transpose**, to **remove from one place and bring to another**.

Here the verb speaks of our total removal from the domain of Satan, into the *glorious Kingdom of the Son, whom the Father loves.*

**It is important to note that we are members of this kingdom right now.**

The writer of Hebrews reminds us:

*“Therefore let us be grateful for receiving (present tense) a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe,” (Heb 12:28 ESV)*

**God (through the work of Jesus) has removed us from the kingdom of darkness (and the judgment of God) and has placed us in the Kingdom of his beloved Son, where we no longer have the wrath of God, but instead stand with and in the Son who is “beloved”**

**The fourth reason we should be thankful:**

**Point #4** - **Vs -14** *in whom we have redemption through his blood*

You and I have been redeemed! The Greek word means the **deliverance** or the **release that is brought about by payment**. **It is the liberation procured through the payment of a ransom!**

You and I owed a debt to God’s law (the soul that sins, it shall die), *“For the wages of sin is death…”* (Ro 6:23 ESV). At Calvary, Christ paid that debt on our behalf. We place our faith in him and find that we have been redeemed.

To ever be part of Christ’s kingdom, we had to be redeemed, the debt we owed had to be paid.

**To be redeemed is to be set free by the payment of a ransom.** We are free, and this amazing, unthinkable, unfathomable release was procured by the *“blood of Jesus”*, indeed by the very life of Jesus.

**The fifth reason we should be thankful:**

**Point #5** - **Vs 14** Not only have we been redeemed… It is also in Christ that we have *the forgiveness of sins.*

**We have been forgiven of every sin, past, present, and future**. This is what God has provided to those who place faith in Christ.

**God did not simply clear our slate, through the sacrifice of His Son.** He did not push the **master reset button** and give us another chance. What God did, through the sacrifice of His Son is ***forgive us*** of all our sins!

The word *forgiveness* means **remission**, **deliverance,** **liberty**. It refers to **pardon**, and **remission**.

The Psalmist expressed this forgiveness of sins like this:

*“as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.” (Ps 103:12 ESV)*

Now, at least momentarily Paul’s focus shifts from what Christ has done for us, to who Christ is. We looked at these last week, so I will simply read over them to keep us in context, because Paul is going to pick right back up where he left off!

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***15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities —  all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,***

OK, picking back up on why we should be thankful-

***“20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. 21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.***

**The sixth reason we should be thankful:**

**Point #6 - Vs 20a -** *and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven making peace by the blood of his cross*.

***Reconcile*** –The verb **καταλλάσσω** (*kat-al-las’-so)* – means to **reconcile**, to **change**, to **exchange**, to **return to favor.**

The Greek word used here is **ἀποκαταλλάσσω** (*ap-ok-at-al-las’-so) –* to reconcile with the preposition **ἀπό** (*apo’).* The preposition intensifies the meaning and now the word means **completely reconciled**, **totally reconciled**, **totally restored to a former state of harmony**.

*“****19*** *For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.* ***20*** *For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope* ***21*** *that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.” (Ro 8:19-21 ESV)*

Then in the next verse Paul personifies the entire creative order:

*“****22*** *For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.* ***23*** *And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.” (Ro 8:22-23 ESV)*

The work of Christ, his sacrifice at Calvary has **“totally reconciled”** the entire creation back to Him!

**The seventh reason we should be thankful:**

**Point #7 - Vs 20b** - *making peace by the blood of his cross.”*

Notice the seventh thing that Paul mentions, his seventh point of what God has done for us is that he has made **peace through the blood of the cross of Christ**!

The Bible teaches that because of our sins, we are at war with God (Paul is about to point this out), we were enemies of God, we were hostile against God, and his judgment looms over us.

*“For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot.” (Ro 8:7 ESV)*

**His offering brought peace!**

**The eight reason we should be thankful:**

**Point #8 - Vs 21–22a** *- And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death,*

Paul expands on **point #6** and applies it specifically to those who have placed faith in Jesus. We were *at one time alienated*– **estranged**, **shutout**, **disconnected from** fellowship and intimacy. We were hostile in both mind and deeds.

That was our condition, we were separated from fellowship with God, we were enemies against God (in both our thoughts and our deeds).

Once again, the Greek word is **ἀποκαταλλάσσω** (*ap-ok-at-al-las’-so)* the word means **completely reconciled**, **totally reconciled**, to be **brought back into a former state of harmony**.

*Reconciled* highlights the reality that the work of Jesus Christ has brought us back into a right relationship, back into a harmonious relationship, **we have been “completely” reconciled.**

We were busy about evil deeds, in fact the prophet Isaiah summed it up:

*“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned —  every one —  to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isa 53:6 ESV)*

Paul is crystal clear, we were reconciled in his **body of flesh**. **BY HIS DEATH!**

**Two things: Christ died not only as our sacrifice, but as our substitute.**

**The ninth reason we should be thankful:**

**Point #9 - Vs 22b -** *he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,*

We have been reconciled to God, by the work of the Father, with the end goal of **presenting us to God**, *holy, blameless, and above reproach*.

**Holy** – **ἅγιος** (*hag’-ee-os)* – **Set apart for God**, **holy**

**Blameless** – **without blemish**, without spot. Jesus himself is the “spotless” lamb of God (IPet 1:19):

*“****18*** *knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold,* ***19*** *but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.” (1Pe 1:18-19 ESV)*

How blameless do you see Jesus? **That is exactly how blameless he has made you!**

**Above reproach** – **unaccused**, and **unaccusable**. Did you hear that. This word brings with it the idea that we cannot be called into account of anything since we are **unreprovable**!

*“****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.” (Eph 2:4-7 ESV)*

**Now the Conditional Statement:**

**Vs 23 -** *if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.”*

John MacArthur said this in his commentary about this verse: ***“One of the most sobering truths in the Bible is that not all who profess to be Christians are in fact saved.”*** Even our Lord taught this:

*“****22*** *On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’* ***23*** *And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’” (Mt 7:22-23 ESV)*

We have talked about the two marks or signs of a believer are **faith** and **love**.

Here Paul, grabs the first, if you indeed *“Continue in the faith****.”***

**By the way, continuing in the faith** is normative for the believer. This is not a **special condition**, but the normal condition. Falling away, going back into the world, turning away from God and the sacrifice of Christ is a **warning and an evidence that a person may not be saved**.

*“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” (2Co 5:17 ESV)*

Notice how Paul describes this continuance:

1. Grounded – to lay a foundation, to be stable
2. Steadfast – to be firm, to be immovable

We can sin, we can fall, we can stumble, and end up in a ditch. But ultimately we should persevere in our faith!

Then Paul makes sure there is no confusion on what he is talking about:

*Vs 23b - not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.”*

**Gospel - εὐαγγέλιον** (*yoo-ang-ghel’-ee-on)* The good news, the glad tiding, the message of Jesus the Messiah, his death, burial, and resurrection.

**Minister -** **διάκονος** (*dee-ak’-on-os)* -servant, one who executes the commands of another, an attendant.

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***24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, 25 of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, 26 the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. 27 To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. 29 For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.”***

**Vs 24 –** *Now I rejoice,* the theme of Philippians is found here, although not the focus, joy, even amidst suffering…

*“that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,” (Php 3:10 ESV*)

*for your sake* **-** Paul’s rejoicing was also for the sake of those who were watching, namely the church!

**V 24b** – Then Paul says something that **captures our attention, something that at first glance is provocative** - *I am filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church*

**An important point at the outset!**

**The sufferings of Christ are not lacking in any salvific way.** In other words, Christ suffering was totally sufficient to secure our salvation, that is Paul’s point throughout chapter 1.

The new testament is clear, what Jesus did at Calvary is completely sufficient for our salvation and there is nothing we can add to it. Our only responsibility is to believe, to exercise faith:

*“"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (Joh 3:16 ESV)*

1. Notice that Paul is saying that this is done for the sake of the church. Not to save them, **but rather to build them up**.

1. Because the enemies of Christ did not fill up all the enmity they wanted to pour out on Jesus, **they poured it out on Paul**, and thus **filled up, what they intended for Christ**.

Then what is Paul saying, what is lacking? What is he talking about? **What is lacking is the suffering that Paul and other believers will experience for the sake of the gospel.**

Jesus tells us:

*“****18*** *¶ "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.* ***19*** *If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.* ***20*** *Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.” (Joh 15:18-20 ESV)*

The lesson for us. Those who wish to represent Christ and serve his church must understand and be willing to suffer persecution!

**Vs - 25** - *of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known****,***

Paul reminds the believers in Colossae that he became a minister of the gospel, according to the **“stewardship of God”**

Can I be honest. If you were to ask me: What is your goal of this Sunday School class, or your ministry as a Sunday School teacher?

It is this, that I might fully know and make fully known the Word of God, so that, we might fully know Him, what He has done for us, and how we should respond. – That’s it. That is my goal. It is that simple.

**Make fully know the word of God, including…**

**Vs 26 -** *the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints.* ***27*** *To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

Then Paul expounds on at least one area he is thinking about when he says making the Word of God fully known, it involves making known *the mystery that has been hidden* throughout the old covenant period (ages and generations).

The mystery that is now *revealed to the saints*.

Now Paul is not talking about something mysterious or some secret ritual, rather he is talking about something that was veiled in the Old Testament, tucked away, not crystal clear.

**Vs 27 -** *God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

**Now as you think about** this ***mystery***, there are a few of these in the Bible. Things that were not extremely clear in the Old Testament, they were there, but veiled.

1. The resurrection of all believers (I Cor 15:51-54) was a mystery that was not fully explained in the Old Testament.
2. That the Gentiles will be fellow heirs and partakers of the promise of Christ through the gospel (Eph 3:3-9) was a mystery and not fully explained in the Old Testament.
3. The mystery of the incarnation of God. That God would be born in human flesh (ITim 3:16), this was not fully developed in the Old Testament.

These are examples, some of the things that were veiled in the Old Testament and now fully revealed in the New Testament, to the saints.

**Now we see the mystery God that Paul has in mind**… *Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

The Old Testament predicted the coming of Messiah, but the idea that he **would live in us**, a group that is **predominantly (numerically) a Gentile church,** was veiled.

The New Testament is clear, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in the believer:

*“****9*** *You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.* ***10*** *¶ But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” (Ro 8:9-10 ESV)*

Believers are now the **“temple of living God:”**

*“…For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” (2Co 6:16b ESV)*

That Jesus dwells within his people, in the person of the Hold Spirit, living in His people is the *“hope of glory.”*

Jesus, living in His people, is the **anchor of all of the promises of heaven.** It is the guarantee of eternal future bliss.

*“****13*** *In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,* ***14*** *who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.” (Eph 1:13-14 ESV)*

**Vs 28-29 -** *Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. 29 For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.”*

The antecedent pronoun goes back to **Jesus, the Messiah**, the one who will live in the believer (an amazing *mystery*) is the one that Paul, the apostles and the early church proclaimed.

Jesus is the central point of the message. Notice Paul said we **proclaim** (**preach**) Jesus, we **warn** everyone (**admonish**, **exhort**, **warn**), **teaching** everyone (**to instruct**).

The goal, *that we may present everyone mature in Christ.*

The goal of Christian ministry is **salvation and maturity**. Paul expressed this clearly in Ephesians:

*“****11*** *And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,* ***12*** *to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,* ***13*** *until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,” (Eph 4:11-13 ESV)*

**Vs 29 -** It is for this very purpose, this very goal that *Paul toils, struggling* with every ounce of his energy, which is really the energy of God.

**Toil -** **κοπιάω** (*kop-ee-ah’-o)* – **work to the point of exhaustion.**

**Struggling** - **ἀγωνίζομαι** (*ag-o-nid’-zom-ahee) –* it is to enter an **athletic contest**, **to compete and contend with maximum effort**.

But lest we get the wrong point, Paul was toiling and struggling in ministry, in proclaiming the gospel, with the **power and the energy of Jesus Christ.**

**Here in chapter 1 Paul focused on four main points.**

1. Prayer for the church
2. The person of Christ
3. The work of Christ
4. The mystery and goal of the gospel, although hidden in the Old Testament completely revealed in the new. Paul was working, with all his energy, to teach and to reach everyone he could.

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