

Colossians - Part 3: 1:13-14: “Our Adoption”
Sunday, September 26th, 2021

I’m reading from the ESV, the English Standard Version:

Colossians 1:13-14:

[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.*

Intro:

This is the heart of the Gospel message encapsulated in 2 short verses.

First let’s just go back quickly and cover just a few things about the book of Colossians that we noted last time:

- Letter written by the Apostle Paul while imprisoned in Rome and who had written this letter without having visited Colossae prior to writing it.
- The church located in Colossae that was started by a man named Epaphras
- The church that it was written to had fallen into confusion about the truth of the Gospel because of the errant teachings of Jewish teachers that had been heavily influenced by a Greek-style philosophy that had all sorts of odd teachings, strict dietary rules, and additional standards that they were trying to place on these believers, trying to make them think that they had to do these things in order to be made **more** acceptable to God.

Paul’s primary aim in writing this letter was to correct all that and to reinforce and emphasize the truth that they were **ALREADY** made as acceptable to God as they would **EVER** be by virtue of

the Person and Work of Christ. And let me stress that point: that if you are in Christ, you cannot possibly be made any MORE acceptable to God than you **already are**.

A couple of takeaways from the first 8 verses of Chapter 1 were:

1. Paul was thanking God for their faith, hope, and love they were showing towards all the saints (“they” = the church at Colossae). They were faithful and loving BECAUSE of the hope laid up for them in heaven. When we really meditate on what awaits us in heaven as believers... we should be quick to realize that we have no time for anything petty or small. Who has time for gossip? Who has time for grumbling and complaining? Who has time for worry and fear? Who has time for anything less than faith and love because of the hope that awaits us? And so, like the church in Colossae, we’re being exhorted to be faithful and loving because of the Living Hope that we have in Christ.
2. The second truth we took away with us was that **WE** are who and what God has chosen to spread His Gospel. Little old us. That He could have used Angels to fly around the world and shout the Gospel non-stop. But that He has voluntarily chosen to include us in His work to reach the world with His plan of redemption through Christ. That WE are a part of what He is doing. That we are His witnesses.

In verses 9-12 we learned that:

1. We are to **persist** in our prayers for others. We are to KEEP others in prayer. To persist in intercessory prayer for others. Remember that Paul said that he had not ceased praying for the church at Colossae. Not ceased - meaning, he prayed for them regularly. That we continually lift people up in prayer, in full expectation of God’s providential move

in their lives in a way that not only benefits them but that most importantly that through our prayers, God's will is done, and is done so in a way that best glorifies Him.

2. We also noted that we are to WALK in a manner worthy of our Lord; not just to **TALK** in a manner worthy of our Lord. So many of us TALK like we're super spiritual but we're out there acting like the devil himself. Gossiping. Spreading rumors. Grumbling, complaining. Causing division. That produces nothing but death. It is so very easy to TALK like we belong to Christ. But it is a whole different matter to WALK as though we ACTUALLY belong to Him.

3. We also saw that we are to be filled with the knowledge of the will of our Lord in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And being exhorted to be filled with that knowledge, we then looked at what God's will actually IS for our lives. Wisdom, Abstaining from Sexual Immorality, Thankfulness In All Circumstances, Knowing Truth and APPLYING it in our lives, Submission To Authority as unto the Lord, Doing Good. And God's will for our lives often involves Suffering. That we would find ourselves in abject dependence upon Him and that in the midst of our suffering, that we would persist in gratitude, doing good, and trusting Him Who saves. Because He has promised to never leave nor forsake us.

Before taking a deeper look at the 13th & 14th verses, let's re-read verse 12. It sets up verses 13-14 nicely. Paul says in Verse 12, "*...giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.*". We ARE qualified. Truly qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. But we are ONLY qualified because God **Himself** has done so ONLY by virtue of the finished work of Christ. Apart from Christ, do you realize what we would

ALL be qualified to receive? The well-deserved Justice of God and the unmitigated Wrath of the Almighty.

And what is the inheritance of the saints in light? Our inheritance is Christ! We inherit Him and He inherits us. Christ inherits a redeemed people and we inherit a Redeemer. And we did absolutely NOTHING to earn it. We did absolutely NOTHING to deserve it. We are qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints because Christ Himself paid for it.

Verses 13 & 14:

As I say, these 2 verses effectively encapsulate the Gospel reality. In Verse 13 & 14, Paul says, *“He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in Whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”* Delivered us from the “domain of darkness”, that’s an interesting phrase. But what does that mean?

If:

- We have been delivered from the domain of darkness...

Then:

- That can only mean that there IS a domain that we once were a part of that we are now delivered from.

Ephesians 2:1-3, Paul writes *“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 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— 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.”* Paul makes it clear that we were “sons of disobedience”; that all of mankind are children of wrath, by their very nature. So the domain of darkness is the

family of satan, into which we were all born. And in verse 13 of Colossians 1, Paul makes it known that God has delivered those of us in Christ from the satanic domain of the world system, TO the kingdom of Christ. We've **literally** been adopted:

We have been taken from being children of Wrath to being adopted as children of God.

We aren't children of God **until** we are adopted **as such** by God Himself through the finished work of Christ.

In 2 Corinthians for example, Chapter 4, verses 4-6, Paul says this, *"In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For 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."* I once was lost but now am found. Was blind but now I see. We who are in Christ, have been **rescued** from the world's system and then adopted into the family of God, under the dominion, kingship, and full protection of His Son, **our Lord Jesus**. And we are **CARRIED** in the arms of Christ Who has redeemed us, Who has called us from death to life, Who has made us alive in Him.

Paul tells the Ephesians in Chapter 5 verse 8, *"...for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light."* We went from wandering around in the domain of total darkness, spiritually blind and completely unable to see Truth, to having our hearts and minds pierced with the light of the Gospel, whereby we were **brought** from death to life, and out of the family of satan to the Kingdom of Christ.

Remember: WE are who God has voluntarily chosen to spread the Gospel message to a dying world. We wonder why the world rejects Christ? It's because they're blind! And the Truth of

Christ, in the Gospel message, is where the Holy Spirit lives and breathes. Our work is to spread His message that Christ came to save sinners.

Paul tells the Thessalonians (1 Thess 5:5) that we (that is we believers) are all children of light, children of the day. That we are not of the night or of the darkness. We're told in Philipians (Phil 2:15), that we are to be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom we are to shine as lights in the world.

Wrapping up Verse 13, where Paul says "*He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son...*". When Jesus was baptized, God said "This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Mat 3:17). This is repeated throughout the synoptic Gospels. This kingdom that we have been "transferred" to or adopted into has been given to the Son by the Father as an expression of His everlasting love for the Son. And that means that every single person that God justifies and calls to Himself is a love gift from the Father to the Son. That is, that YOU AND I who are in Christ, are a GIFT from God to our Lord Jesus. And there is NOTHING that you and I did to earn that. That should cause us to buckle under the weight of such Sovereignty in our redemption. In John, Chapter 6:37 we read the words of our Lord saying, "*All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out*". We are His inheritance. And He is ours.

And finally, in Verse 14 Paul writes, "*in Whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*". This word "redemption" in the original Greek is the same word used to describe the freeing of slaves from their bondage. And so you can see the obvious allusion to the freedom from the slavery and bondage to sin that we as believers have received. Now within the particular context of what Paul is writing to the Colossians, redemption is understood to mean the forgiveness of sins which is something that they have ALREADY BEEN GIVEN. And throughout this letter,

Paul is emphasizing what they have **already received** in Christ as a counter to the false teachers who were trying to undermine the sufficiency of Christ in salvation.

Could there BE a more grave error than to rely on our own sufficiency for salvation? Our righteousness is as filthy rags. My salvation does NOT come from me. It depends on the finished work of Christ. We cannot earn our salvation through effort or works. It isn't meritorious. He saved me BECAUSE OF WHO **HE** IS. He saved me because **SALVATION BELONGS TO THE LORD**. Our salvation does NOT belong to us in the sovereign sense. It belongs to us in the recipient sense only. And any of our works **toward** salvation are a blasphemy to the sufficiency of Christ's Atoning work on the cross.

Our righteousness isn't righteousness at all. The people in Hell **deserve** to be there. The people in Heaven **don't deserve** to be there. The difference is that the ones in Hell have received Justice, and the ones in Heaven are recipients of Grace. We were ALL born dead in our sin and trespasses. There isn't one good among us, not even one. "*The only thing I contribute to my salvation is the sin that made Christ's sacrifice necessary*" [paraphrased - Jonathan Edwards].

- Story of my salvation & how my works don't stack up
- Our righteousness
- Call to Christ!