

## Be Ye Thankful

Scripture Reading: **Colossians 3:15**

“AND LET THE PEACE OF GOD RULE IN YOUR HEARTS, TO THE WHICH ALSO YE ARE CALLED IN ONE BODY; AND BE YE THANKFUL.”

### Introduction

On Sunday evening a few short weeks ago we considered a lesson concerning our “Spiritual Abundance”. In that study we recognized that God provides for our spiritual well-being an abundance that is beyond the human mind’s ability to measure. This evening we’re going to consider that in view of these tremendous blessings we should always be thankful.

In a few weeks we will celebrate an annual holiday called Thanksgiving. While that holiday, contrary to popular opinion, is not unique to the United States; was begun for religious reasons; it has become basically just another secular holiday celebrated by people in this country in many ways. A few celebrate with religious services, some with periods of special giving of thanks for our abundance, some with a special gathering of family but with many of our worldly neighbors, it is celebrated with beer and football.

We’re not advocating celebrating special religious holidays for in the life of a Christian every day should be a day of thanksgiving. I’ve read in historical accounts outside of the scripture that many under the Mosaic Covenant considered that the person who would accept the gifts of God’s providence and sit down to a meal without giving thanks was no better than a thief. But instead of thinking about our material blessings let us think about the abundance of spiritual blessings that God provides for us. Paul gave thanks for faithful brethren:

**Colossians 1:2-3** “TO THE SAINTS AND FAITHFUL BRETHERN IN CHRIST WHICH ARE AT COLOSSAE: GRACE **be** UNTO YOU, AND PEACE, FROM GOD OUR FATHER AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. WE GIVE THANKS TO GOD AND THE FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, PRAYING ALWAYS FOR YOU,”

Realizing that without an advocate before the Father, without the sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross, without the shedding of His blood to provide for the cleansing of our souls that we would indeed be “MEN MOST MISERABLE” (**I Corinthians 15:19**) Paul gave thanks in a very short simple way for Christ and the grace of God that brought him to earth:

“THANKS BE UNTO GOD FOR HIS UNSPEAKABLE GIFT.” **II Corinthians 9:15**

## Be Ye Thankful

When we give thanks to God there is but one avenue of communication; only one means of expressing our undying gratitude to our heavenly father and that is through prayer.

Jesus set the example for thankfulness. At the grave of Lazarus He raised his eyes to heaven and thanked his Father for hearing him:

**John 11:41** "THEN THEY TOOK AWAY THE STONE *from the place* WHERE THE DEAD WAS LAID. AND JESUS LIFTED UP *his* EYES, AND SAID, FATHER, I THANK THEE THAT THOU HAST HEARD ME."

At the institution of the Lord's Supper:

**Matthew 26:27** "AND HE TOOK THE CUP, AND GAVE THANKS, AND GAVE *it* TO THEM, SAYING, DRINK YE ALL OF IT;"

As we have already seen in his writing; the Apostle Paul thanked God for many things. To the church at Corinth for Jesus Christ and the grace of God that sent His Son to this earth.

**I Corinthians 1:4** "I THANK MY GOD ALWAYS ON YOUR BEHALF, FOR THE GRACE OF GOD WHICH IS GIVEN YOU BY JESUS CHRIST;"

He instructed the brethren at Colossae to always continue in prayer and thanksgiving:

**Colossians 4:2** "CONTINUE IN PRAYER, AND WATCH IN THE SAME WITH THANKSGIVING;"

And the church at Philippi to take their requests to God in this manner:

**Philippians 4:6** "BE CAREFUL FOR NOTHING; BUT IN EVERY THING BY PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION WITH THANKSGIVING LET YOUR REQUESTS BE MADE KNOWN UNTO GOD."

## Be Thankful for the Peace of God

The first thing that I want us to consider in thanksgiving to God is the peace of God. The peace that we spoke about in the scripture reading at the beginning:

**Colossians 3:15** "AND LET THE PEACE OF GOD RULE IN YOUR HEARTS..."

## Be Ye Thankful

How do we acquire that kind of peace? Let's go over to the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans and look at the example that Paul uses there of Abraham. There we see in verse 9 that "FAITH WAS RECKONED TO ABRAHAM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS" and in verse 13 that our spiritual inheritance comes through the "RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH." Through faith Abraham left friends, family and homeland to dwell in a land where God sent him. Abraham accepted the covenant of circumcision as a seal of his faith (v.11), through his faith he became a father when it would have been impossible through ordinary means (v.19-20). And because of his faith, through his seed came a savior:

"WHO WAS DELIVERED FOR OUR OFFENSES AND WAS RAISED AGAIN FOR OUR JUSTIFICATION." **Romans 4:25**

And it is through this justification, this sanctification, this opportunity to remove sin from our souls the we are provided the Peace of God:

**Romans 5:1** "THEREFORE BEING JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."

The death, the sacrifice of the "ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD" made that peace possible because without that sacrifice, without the means to become children of God; we were alienated from God:

**Ephesians 2:12-14** "THAT AT THE TIME YE WERE WITHOUT CHRIST, BEING ALIENS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL, AND STRANGERS FROM THE COVENANTS OF PROMISE, HAVING NO HOPE, AND WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD: BUT NOW IN CHRIST JESUS YE WHO SOMETIMES WERE FAR OFF ARE MADE NIGH BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST. FOR HE IS OUR PEACE..."

Without Christ we were strangers, aliens "FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL", the kingdom of God. For people in this condition there can be no peace. Paul writes that we can be reconciled. In accounting when we reconcile an account, we first of all identify all of the entries in the account that should not be there and remove them. Then we identify the entries that are missing and include them. It is the same process when God reconciles our souls to his service. First of all, that which should not be there, sin, is removed. Then when we identify those things that are missing from our lives, fruits of the spirit in most cases; these are added and we become reconciled to God. Just as Paul writes:

**Colossians 1:21** "AND YOU, THAT WERE SOME TIME ALIENATED AND ENEMIES IN *your* MIND BY WICKED WORKS, YET NOW HATH HE RECONCILED."

## Be Ye Thankful

So when we are reconciled, when we are converted and obedient to the commandments of God we make peace with God:

“AND HAVING MADE PEACE THROUGH THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS, BY HIM TO RECONCILE ALL THINGS UNTO HIMSELF; BY HIM *I say*, WHETHER *they be* THINGS IN EARTH, OR THINGS IN HEAVEN.” **Colossians 1:20**

The peace of God can be acquired no other way. It cannot be found for sale in a market, it cannot be found in the pursuit of worldly goods, it cannot be found in the pursuit of pleasures and worldly lusts. It can be found only in one place:

“BE CAREFUL FOR NOTHING; BUT IN EVERY THING BY PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION WITH THANKSGIVING LET YOUR REQUESTS BE MADE KNOWN TO GOD. AND THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH PASSETH ALL UNDERSTANDING, SHALL KEEP YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS THROUGH CHRIST JESUS.” **Philippians 4:6-7**

As the words of the song we sometimes sing “Peace, Perfect Peace” express so beautifully:

“Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin?”  
“The blood of Jesus whispers peace within.”  
“Peace, perfect peace, by thronging duties pressed?”  
“To do the will of Jesus this is rest.”  
“Peace, perfect peace, with sorrows surging round?”  
“On Jesus’ bosom naught but calm is found”

Be thankful for the Perfect Peace of God.

## Be Thankful for the Privilege of Being in the Body of Christ

Jesus Christ is the head of the body, which is the church:

**Colossians 1:18** “AND HE IS THE HEAD OF THE BODY, THE CHURCH, WHO IS THE BEGINNING, THE FIRST-BORN FROM THE DEAD; THAT IN ALL *things* ‘HE MIGHT HAVE THE PRE-EMINENCE”

In Ephesians chapter one Paul writes that it is God who:

“...HATH PUT ALL *things* UNDER HIS FEET, AND GAVE HIM *to be* THE HEAD OVER ALL *things* TO THE CHURCH, WHICH IS HIS BODY, THE FULLNESS OF HIM THAT FILLETH ALL IN ALL.” **Ephesians 1:22-23**

## Be Ye Thankful

In the body of Christ all members are important. The Apostle Paul writes to the church in Corinth:

**“FOR AS THE BODY IS ONE, AND HATH MANY MEMBERS, AND ALL THE MEMBERS OF THAT ONE BODY, BEING MANY, ARE ONE BODY; SO ALSO *is* CHRIST.” I Corinthians 12:12**

And he goes on using the human body to help us understand this principle. Each and every element of our bodies is important to our continued physical well-being; is important to our ability to function. It doesn't matter whether it's an eye, an ear, a finger or even a little toe, which helps provide us balance. Each has an important role to fulfill. It is the same in the Lord's church; I doesn't matter whether we're a preacher, Bible class teacher, someone who visits the shut-ins, the person who cleans the building in which we meet or prepares the emblems for the Lord's Supper; each of us has an important role to fulfill.

In the body of Christ we have the opportunity to fulfill the purpose for which God placed us here on this earth and that is to serve Him as the wise man of God writes in (**Ecclesiastes 12:13**). “...FEAR GOD AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS FOR THIS IS THE WHOLE OF MAN.”

And it is to Him we owe honor and glory.

**“NOW UNTO HIM THAT IS ABLE TO DO EXCEEDING ABUNDANTLY ABOVE ALL THAT WE ASK OR THINK, ACCORDING TO THE POWER THAT WORKETH IN US, UNTO HIM *be* GLORY IN THE CHURCH BY CHRIST JESUS THROUGHOUT ALL AGES, WORLD WITHOUT END. AMEN.”**  
**Ephesians 3:20-21**

To him be “GLORY” where? “IN THE CHURCH.”, for how long?” “WORLD WITHOUT END”. And not only for you and I but all that we are able to influence to follow our example just as Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount:

**Matthew 5:16** “LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN, THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS, AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN.”

It is only in the Body of Christ that we find salvation for Christ is the savior of it:

**Ephesians 5:23** “FOR THE HUSBAND IS HEAD OF THE WIFE, EVEN AS CHRIST IS HEAD OF THE CHURCH: AND HE IS THE SAVIOR OF HE BODY.”

## Be Ye Thankful

He gave himself for it, sanctified it, washed it, cleansed it of all things objectionable to his Father just as Paul continues in the same letter:

**Ephesians 5:25-27** "HUSBANDS, LOVE YOUR WIVES, EVEN AS CHRIST ALSO LOVE THE CHURCH, AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR IT; THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE IT WITH THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD, THAT HE MIGHT PRESENT IT TO HIMSELF A GLORIOUS CHURCH, NOT HAVING SPOT, OR WRINKLE, OR ANY SUCH THING; BUT THAT IT SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH."

It is His because he paid the ultimate price for it. He purchased it with his own blood. Just as Paul told the elders from Ephesus:

**Acts 20:28** "TAKE HEED THEREFORE UNTO YOURSELVES AND TO ALL THE FLOCK, OVER THE WHICH THE HOLY GHOST HATH MADE YOU OVERSEERS, TO FEED THE CHURCH OF GOD, WHICH HE HATH PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD."

Be thankful for the privilege of being a member of the body of Christ, the church purchased with the blood of the only begotten Son of God.

## Be Thankful for Your Calling

As children of God we are called to a vocation, a work, a job, if you will, a purpose in this life that has an eternal reward. Even if we held the highest office in this land, or even on the earth, we could not have been called to an honor or a work any greater than that as a workman for the God of heaven. Paul writes:

**Ephesians 4:1-2** "I THEREFORE, THE PRISONER OF THE LORD, BESEECH YOU THAT YE WALK WORTHY OF THE VOCATION WHEREWITH YE ARE CALLED, WITH ALL LOWLINESS AND MEEKNESS, WITH LONG-SUFFERING, FORBEARING ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE;"

We are called to this vocation through the gospel of Jesus Christ, the word of God:

**II Thessalonians 2:13-14** "BUT WE ARE BOUND TO GIVE THANKS ALWAYS TO GOD FOR YOU, BRETHREN BELOVED OF THE LORD, BECAUSE GOD HATH FROM THE BEGINNING CHOSEN YOU TO SALVATION THROUGH SANCTIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT AND BELIEF OF THE TRUTH: WHEREUNTO HE CALLED YOU BY OUR GOSPEL, TO THE OBTAINING OF THE GLORY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."

## Be Ye Thankful

Paul reminded us in **Ephesians 4:1** that we must walk worthy of this calling because it is a "HIGH CALLING". As he also wrote to the Philippian brethren:

**Philippians 3:14** "I PRESS TOWARD THE MARK FOR THE PRIZE OF THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN JESUS CHRIST"

It is a "HIGH CALLING" because of the unbelievable value of the prize that is the reward for those who answer his call and serve him faithfully. Just as Paul when he faced prison and imminent death again for his service to God wrote to his son in the faith:

**II Timothy 4:7-8** "I HAVE FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT, I HAVE FINISHED *my* COURSE, I HAVE KEPT THE FAITH: HENCEFORTH THERE IS LAID UP FOR ME A CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHICH THE LORD, THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE, SHALL GIVE ME AT THAT DAY; AND NOT TO ME ONLY, BUT UNTO ALL THEM ALSO THAT LOVE HIS APPEARING."

Thank God for his call to honor, worship and serve him. Don't be like those who will not honor and worship God faithfully. There are even some among us here at Sunset who neglect their calling and are hap-hazard about their worship and service to God Almighty. Be thankful for and faithful for His calling.

## Be Thankful that God Has Made Us Fit for Heaven

How were we made fit for heaven? Paul writes that we should again be:

"GIVING THANKS UNTO THE FATHER, WHICH HATH MADE US MEET (fit, appropriate) TO BE PARTAKERS OF THE INHERITANCE OF THE SAINTS IN LIGHT: WHO HATH DELIVERED US FROM THE POWER OF DARKNESS, AND HATH TRANSLATED *us* INTO THE KINGDOM OF HIS DEAR SON: IN WHOM WE HAVE REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, *even* THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS:" **Colossians 1:12-14**

He made us fit for heaven by sanctifying us, by justifying us, by cleansing us of our sins, by the washing our sins away in baptism as Ananias told Saul (**Acts 22:16**), by redeeming us, buying us back from Satan; by rescuing us from the bondage of sin:

"FORASMUCH AS YE KNOW THAT YE WERE NOT REDEEMED WITH CORRUPTIBLE THINGS, *as* SILVER AND GOLD, FROM YOUR VAIN CONVERSATION *received* BY TRADITION FROM YOUR FATHERS; BUT WITH THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST, AS OF A LAMB WITHOUT BLEMISH AND WITHOUT SPOT." **I Peter 1:18-19**

## Be Ye Thankful

This is one more of the spiritual blessings that we have in such abundance as children of God. But it can be received only if we are in Christ:

**Ephesians 1:3** "BLESSED *be* THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO HATH BLESSED US WITH ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN HEAVENLY *places* IN CHRIST." **v.7** "IN WHOM WE HAVE REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS, ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE."

When we obey the commandments that lead to our baptism which puts into Christ (**Galatians 3:26-27**) our sins are removed, washed away (**Acts 22:16**), they are forgiven:

**Colossians 1:14** "IN WHOM WE HAVE REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, **even** THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS:"

When our sins are forgiven they are removed, erased, we are washed clean in the sight of God and they are never to be remembered again. So that we can be fit for heaven, as Paul writes:

"AND YOU, THAT WERE SOMETIME ALIENATED AND ENEMIES IN *your* MIND BY WICKED WORKS, YET NOW HE HATH RECONCILED IN THE BODY OF HIS FLESH THROUGH DEATH, TO PRESENT YOU HOLY AND UNBLAMABLE AND UNREPROVABLE IN HIS SIGHT:" **Colossians 1:21-22**

When our sins are forgiven, when we are committed to Christ, when we are saved we are added to his church (**Acts 2:47**), we become citizens of his kingdom, we become subject to his Law. We place him in control of our lives:

**John 14:6** "JESUS SAID UNTO HIM, I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE: NO MAN COMETH UNTO THE FATHER, BUT BY ME."

When we place Christ in control we change our lives, we change our focus, we put the highest purpose known to man as the ultimate goal in our lives:

"IF YE BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD. SET YOUR AFFECTION ON THINGS ABOVE, NOT ON THINGS ON THE EARTH. FOR YE ARE DEAD, AND YOUR LIFE IS HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD." **Colossians 3:1-**



## Be Ye Thankful

And if we remain faithful to that commitment we will be fit for heaven and we will be like Jesus when he comes:

**Colossians 3:4** "WHEN CHRIST, *who is* OUR LIFE, SHALL APPEAR, THEN SHALL YE ALSO APPEAR WITH HIM IN GLORY."

Just as the Apostle of Love testified to those whom he wrote:

**I John 3:2** "BELOVED NOW ARE WE THE SONS OF GOD, AND IT DOTHT NOT YET APPEAR WHAT WE SHALL BE: BUT WE KNOW THAT, WHEN HE SHALL APPEAR, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM; FOR WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS."

Because of our manner of living, because the way we conduct ourselves is being directed by our commitment to God, our focus is on our eternal destiny:

"FOR OUR CONVERSATION IS IN HEAVEN; FROM WHENCE ALSO WE LOOK FOR THE SAVIOR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST: WHO SHALL CHANGE OUR VILE BODY, THAT IT MAY BE FASHIONED LIKE UNTO HIS GLORIOUS BODY, ACCORDING TO THE WORKING WHEREBY HE IS ABLE EVEN TO SUBDUE ALL THINGS UNTO HIMSELF." **Philippians 3:20-21**

Brethren, be thankful that God the Father has made us fit for heaven. Because; without that blessing we will not see heaven.

## Expressing Our Thanksgiving

Whether we believe it or not, ingratitude breeds infidelity. If we do not recognize that these manifold blessings come from God and be thankful to God for them, how could we expect to be faithful? If we are truly acknowledging God as ruler of this universe, the giver of all blessings both temporal and spiritual, worshiping Him, and honoring Him as we should we will be strengthened continually and escape the danger of falling away. But if we are like those that Paul describes in:

**Romans 1:21-22** "BECAUSE THAT, WHEN THEY KNEW GOD, THEY GLORIFIED *him* NOT AS GOD, NEITHER WERE THANKFUL; BUT BECAME VAIN IN THEIR IMAGINATIONS, AND THEIR FOOLISH HEART WAS DARKENED. PROFESSING THEMSELVES TO BE WISE, THEY BECAME FOOLS,"

## Be Ye Thankful

We express our thanksgiving to God through Christ Jesus as Paul writes:

**Colossians 3:17** "AND WHATSOEVER YE DO IN WORD OF DEED, **do** ALL IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS, GIVING THANKS TO GOD AND THE FATHER BY HIM."

By being in Christ:

**Colossians 1:2** "TO THE SAINTS AND FAITHFUL BROTHERS IN CHRIST WHICH ARE AT COLOSSAE: GRACE **be** UNTO YOU, AND PEACE, FROM GOD OUR FATHER AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST." **v.14** "IN WHOM WE HAVE REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, **even** THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS."

By having Christ in us:

**Colossians 1:27** "TO WHOM GOD WOULD MAKE KNOWN WHAT **is** THE RICHES OF THE GLORY OF THIS MYSTERY AMONG THE GENTILES; WHICH IS CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY."

By letting His word dwell or abide in us:

**Colossians 3:16** "LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU RICHLY IN ALL WISDOM; TEACHING AND ADMONISHING ONE ANOTHER IN PSALMS AND HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS, SINGING WITH GRACE IN YOUR HEARTS TO THE LORD."

By hiding our lives in Christ:

**Colossians 3:3** "FOR YE ARE DEAD, AND YOUR LIFE IS HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD."

We express our thanksgiving to God in our singing:

**Hebrews 13:15** "BY HIM THEREFORE LET US OFFER THE SACRIFICE OF PRAISE TO GOD CONTINUALLY, THAT IS, THE FRUIT OF **our** LIPS GIVING THANKS TO HIS NAME."

Through our prayers of thanksgiving:

**Colossians 3:15** "AND LET THE PEACE OF GOD RULE IN YOUR HEARTS, TO THE WHICH ALSO YE ARE CALLED IN ONE BODY; AND BE YE THANKFUL."

## Be Ye Thankful

In our giving:

**II Corinthians 9:6-7** “BUT THIS *I say*, HE WHICH SOWETH SPARINGLY SHALL REAP ALSO SPARINGLY; AND HE WHICH SOWETH BOUNTIFULLY SHALL ALSO REAP BOUNTIFULLY. EVERY MAN ACCORDING AS HE PURPOSETH IN HIS HEART, *so let him give*, NOT GRUDGINGLY, OR OF NECESSITY: FOR GOD LOVETH A CHEERFUL GIVER.”

And not just the giving of our substance, our means, not just of our living, but like the Macedonians honored by Paul to those at Corinth because:

“AND *this they did*, NOT AS WE HOPED, BUT FIRST GAVE THEIR OWN SELVES TO THE LORD, AND UNTO US BY THE WILL OF GOD.” **II Corinthians 8:5**

Have you expressed your thankfulness to God by giving yourself into His service?

Invitation