

## **Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time***

### **Giving Thanks for God's Deliverance**

Scripture: Colossians 1:12-14

Code: 80-218

We are called upon to be thankful in everything to give thanks, for this is the will of God concerning you, 1 Thessalonians 5:18 says. We are to be thankful for everything, thankful always. And of all the things that we might be thankful for, and there are many, the primary point of thanksgiving is our salvation in Jesus Christ. Everything else is secondary to that. In 2 Corinthians 9:15, Paul says, "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift." That is the gift of salvation in His Son...And in Paul's great doxology in the end of 1 Corinthians 15, he says, "Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Again, the focal point of our thanksgiving is on the person and work of Jesus Christ. Earlier in 1 Corinthians chapter 1 in verse 4, Paul said, "I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus." So being thankful for my own salvation, being thankful for your salvation, for the work of God in my life and the work of God in your life. In 2 Corinthians 2:14, Paul again writes, "Thanks be to God who always leads us in His triumph in Christ."

So when it comes to being thankful, you can be thankful for a lot of things. But mostly we are thankful for our salvation. That is the primary thing, and that is the attitude of Paul in Colossians chapter 1. In verse 12, he is giving thanks to the Father. Now this is typical of Paul. He does this very often at the outset of his letters. "Giving thanks to the Father." And for what? For this: "The Father who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. For He 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."

There are a number of words and phrases there that speak about our salvation: Qualified us, sharing, the inheritance, being saints, dwelling in Light, being transferred into the Kingdom of His beloved Son, receiving redemption and the forgiveness of sins. All of those are aspects and features and dimensions of our salvation. But at the heart of all of that is that word in verse 13, "delivered." The reason we give thanks is because it was God who delivered us from the domain of darkness. So right at the heart of this is the matter of deliverance...

We have been taken out of darkness into light. We've been taken from the domain of darkness. That is the kingdom of darkness under Satan, and placed into the Kingdom of God's beloved Son. By virtue of that, we are now qualified to share in the inheritance that God gives to the saints who live in light. We have received redemption, forgiveness for sins. All of those things sort of surround this great concept of deliverance. That is really at the heart of the Gospel. We are delivered from the domain of

darkness and transferred to the Kingdom of His beloved Son. That deliverance involves redemption. It involves forgiveness. It involves being qualified to share. It involves an inheritance. It involves sainthood...So, again, I say right at the heart of this whole matter of salvation is this massive, overreaching concept of deliverance.

Let's talk about some of the features. Verse 12, "Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us." Some translations, who had made us fit or has suited us. But, really, literally, it means to be qualified. In fact you could translate that to be given the title...to be privileged, to enter into the position or the right. It doesn't refer to character. It doesn't really refer to nature. It refers to title. It refers to right. We don't deserve...to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. By our nature, or by our character, we would be disqualified. But we thank God the Father who has qualified us. That is a very unusual verb. It's used only one other time in the entire New Testament...and it does mean just that.

Now you say, "How were we qualified?" Well, we weren't qualified by our works, were we? Weren't qualified by our good deeds. We weren't qualified by our religiosity. We were qualified when we were unqualified and, frankly, would've been eternally unqualified. Had not God in His mercy, and here's the key word, justified us. Literally declared us righteous by virtue of imputing to us the righteousness of Christ. So we became qualified because God credited to us the perfection of Jesus Christ.

Just to expand a little bit on this. Turn back to Ephesians chapter 2. There's so many places in the New Testament where this is dealt with, but to give you the picture from perhaps the negative side, if you go back to Ephesians 2 and verse 11, it describes the unconverted person...as the uncircumcised. And then in verse 12 it says that, "You were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world."

Now that qualifies you for hell and nothing more. Just to sum up verse 12, this is the actual state of a man and a woman. Christless. Christless. Separate from Christ. No hope for salvation. Stateless. Aliens from Israel. No rights to any covenantal privileges. And he follows that up. "Covenantless, without promises...and then he adds...hopeless...and then he adds...Godless." Christless, stateless, promiseless, hopeless, Godless. That's how we were. And that, folks, is what it means to be unqualified, utterly and completely unqualified.

If you wanna further see the condition, you can go to the fourth chapter of Ephesians, and you will find that we walk...in the end of verse 17..."in the futility of the mind, darkened in understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that in them, because of the hardness of their heart, callous, sensual, practicing every kind of impurity with greediness." I mean this...this defines a man and a woman apart from salvation. Self-centered, that's essentially what verse 17 is saying. "Walking in the futility of your mind." Mataos, the...the emptiness, the vanity, the uselessness of your own self-centered thoughts. "Darkened in your understanding" means ignorant. And then...literally

shameless appears in verse 19 with that term "callous." And you have even the idea of a reprobate mind given over completely to unblushing sensuality. A kind of sensuality that has no shame.

So I mean this is how we were, and this is the way everybody is. Christless, stateless, covenantless, hopeless, godless, self-centered, ignorant, shameless, and with a reprobate useless mind. That is the state that we are in. That is our fallen condition. And no wonder Paul, back to Colossians 1 says, "Giving thanks to the Father who, seeing us in that unqualified condition, has qualified us.

How did He do that? Well, we're back to the great truth of the Gospel called justification, or God declaring us righteous by imputing the righteousness or the perfection of Christ to us...And because He qualified us that way, we have been given the privilege of sharing in the inheritance of the saints in Light. We have become, literally, partakers, which means to receive something by lot or portion. To receive something as your own and very personal, the inheritance is that which God promises to His people. Belongs to the saints who dwell in Light.

How do you...how do you go from being totally unqualified to being a joint heir with Jesus Christ, inheriting everything that God has promised to His own beloved who dwell in His effable light? How do you do that? You don't do it on your own, and that's why Paul thanks God for doing it, because only God can qualify the unqualified. You say, "Well, I had to do something." Yeah, you just have to believe. You have to accept the work, the person and work of Jesus Christ, and you will receive the inheritance.

What is the inheritance? Well, in a word, eternal life. In a phrase, eternal life. It's what it is. It is eternal life, and everything that eternal life involves. Eternal joy, eternal pleasure, eternal delight, eternal worship, eternal service, eternal bliss, everything, eternal perfection, eternal righteousness. All of those wonderful things.

Now, how is it that such an inheritance is given to such unqualified people? It is because God determined to do it in order to give glory to Himself, which glory He receives when we express to Him our thanks, our thanks. So the first thing here that we see is that this deliverance involves transferring us from being unqualified to being qualified with...with simply a declaration by the grace and goodness of God who determined to love us when we were sinners, Romans 5 says, and to reclassify us from the unqualified to the qualified by applying to us the perfections of Jesus Christ and treating us as if we lived Christ's perfect life...

His thanks continues in verse 13. "For He...as he explains it further...For He delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the Kingdom of His beloved Son." It's another way to say that, really. It's another dimension of it. And that's why I've been...I've been saying to you the last couple Sunday mornings, I don't...I...I...I feel badly that we don't say more about deliverance. Because deliverance runs right along as a parallel here with justification. In...in verse 12, we are

qualified, which is justification. In verse 13, we are delivered, which is this wonderful transfer that is the parallel. Maybe the Old Testament story of God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt was on the mind of the Apostle Paul. One of the plagues, you remember there in Egypt, was darkness. And the pillar of cloud was darkness to the Egyptians and light to Israel. Only God could deliver them.

God certainly has delivered us. Literally rescued. It...it means to draw to one's self. God literally took us and drew us to Himself, rescued us. It's that same word we talked about this morning, *ruomy*. It carries the idea, and this is inherent in it, of power. Because in order to rescue somebody, you have to have the power to overcome whatever it is that holds them. If you're gonna rescue somebody who's drowning, you gotta have enough strength to go into the water and to pull the person out. If you're going to rescue somebody from the executioners, you're gonna have to have the power of some great authority to stay the execution. In...in the case of us, if the Lord is gonna rescue us from the kingdom of darkness, He's gonna have to have power over the kingdom of darkness. As we've seen in the case of Jesus and the demons, He does have that power.

The term *ruomydelivered* always means the same thing. It...it always means to rescue somebody. To deliver somebody with the implication that you have power greater than whatever holds that person in bondage. And I want you to notice, too, that this is an *arrastense* which is something that has been accomplished. He delivered us. It's a done thing.

If you were to take the concept of deliver, which is almost, I think safe to say, a synonym for being saved, if you take the concept of being delivered, you'll find that we are being in salvation delivered from sin. We are delivered, 1 Thessalonians 1:10, "From the wrath to come." Galatians 1:4, "We are delivered from the world." Luke 1:74, you remember Zacharias said this, "We are delivered from enemies." Salvation is deliverance. That's how the prophets said it, and that's how the New Testament affirms it. So we are delivered from sin. We are delivered from wrath. We are delivered from the world. We're delivered from enemies. And, of course, the greatest enemy is Satan, and we are delivered from him and from his kingdom.

So I remind you of what we said this morning, when you become a believer, deliverance has already taken place. We have been delivered from the domain of darkness, literally from the power of darkness, the jurisdiction of darkness, the authority of darkness. And, again, Jesus showed that He had the power to go into the kingdom of darkness, the strong man's house, as he called it, and to bind the strong man, who was Satan and his demonic forces, and rescue the prisoners that were there...

By virtue of what Jesus possesses as God, He has that power. It is His power that allows Him to deliver us from darkness. It is this perfect righteousness of Christ that allows Him to requalify us. It is His death for sin that allows Him to deliver us from sin and judgment. Everything He is, everything He did fits into this wonderful rescue. So, as believers, we have been requalified, re...I should say reclassified. We have gone from being unqualified to being qualified. We have gone from being

imprisoned in the domain of darkness, the realm of Satan, to being transferred to the Kingdom of God's beloved Son. We have a new King over us, and it is Jesus Christ. We have a new King in us, and it is Jesus Christ. We can claim that deliverance as a part of our salvation.

Lemme talk a little further into verse 13, and take this word "transferred." It can be translated remove. It...it means change, and the idea of the word "transferred" really suits. The Lord has rescued us from being in the domain of darkness, the realm of Satan, and He has removed us out of that into the Kingdom of His beloved Son. Literally, the Kingdom of the Son of His love...

And now we are in Christ, and Christ is in us, and who will ever be able to change that? Anybody? Not according to Romans 8, "Who shall separate us from the love of God, was in Christ Jesus," and you know the wonderful passage. Nothing can separate us from that. So we have been delivered into the Son of God's love, the Lord Jesus Christ. His Kingdom, His reign. He is our King and our authority. And in that deliverance, verse 14 adds we have redemption, and we have the forgiveness of sins.

Now, just a word about redemption. Redemption is part and parcel of our deliverance. You understand the word redemption. To redeem something is to pay a price to buy it back. If you put something in the pawn shop, and you go back later and pay the money, you can buy it back. You can redeem it.

Redemption is one of the primary words that expresses the work of Christ. If I remember right, you could say sacrifice, offering, propitiation, ransom, reconciliation, and redemption. And I won't go into those other ones. But redemption means to buy back. It's used four times in the New Testament. And in each case, the thought is of deliverance. And in each case, it's related to the death of Christ which provides, way...the way verse 14 ends, the forgiveness of sins.

Now, if you see, as I'm going through this little bit, that the lines aren't...aren't clear cut. That's exactly the way it should be. This is all blended together. What you're looking at here is salvation. Paul is saying, "I'm grateful for my salvation," which is the word delivered. Delivered is the synonym. It's the rescue, and the rescue involves all of this. It involves taking the unqualified and making them qualified. It involves taking them who were poor and making them rich with the inheritance. It involves taking unholy ones and turning them into saints. It involves removing them from darkness and bringing them to light. It involves taking them out of the sphere of satanic influence and bringing them under the authority and the sovereignty of the beloved Son of God. It involves paying a purchase price to buy them back, and the price was paid to God, who is the One who was judge, who had to be satisfied. It involves the forgiveness of sins.

We talk about all these things. We're familiar with all this. When you think about your Christian life, you...what you have here is a sort of a summary of all the elements of salvation. Here we were, the

unqualified, and we became qualified, justified. Here we were, the poor, destitute, and we inherit the Kingdom. Here we were, the unholy, and we become saints, which is just another word for holy. Here we were in darkness, and now we are in light. Here we were in the kingdom of hell or the kingdom of Satan, and now we are in the Kingdom of God's beloved Son. We were slaves, but we have been redeemed. We were guilty, but we have been forgiven. And all of that fills up the meaning of the word "delivered."

The more I think about this, the more I think that somebody oughta start talking about this a little more loudly. Salvation is a synonym for deliverance. Deliverance brings with it justification. It brings with it, as you'll notice in verse 12, inheritance. It brings with it sanctification. It brings with it illumination...It brings with it redemption. It brings with it forgiveness. We've been delivered. And now we are in a permanent state of having been delivered. Past tense, He delivered us...

When you come to the Lord's table then, in every sense, I think in every real sense, you're coming to a table of thanksgiving. What could you have done to qualify yourself? Nothing. What could you have done to earn the inheritance? Nothing. What could you have done to make the unholy holy? What could you have done to extract yourself out of darkness and draw yourself into light? What could you have done to get out of Satan's kingdom and into the Kingdom of Christ? What could you have done? What price could you have paid for redemption? And what could you have done to achieve for...to achieve forgiveness? And, of course, the answer is absolutely nothing...

And so we're back to where we started in verse 12, giving thanks to the Father. See, in the...in the beginning, it was all His plan, wasn't it? God the Father determined that He would save unqualified, undeserving, poor, unholy, dark slaves to sin. Why would He do that? He did it so that He would be thanked for it, so that He would be praised for it. So in a very real sense, the purpose for redemption is thanksgiving.

Now, lemme expand on that for just a moment, and then we'll come to the Lord's table. When you realize that what we're gonna do forever in Heaven according to Scripture is thank the Lord. We're gonna praise Him and glorify Him and honor Him and worship Him forever and ever and ever. And at the core of all worship is thanks. Thanks, God, for who You are. Thanks, God, for what You have done. That's at the core of all worship. It is...it is reciting God's character, as I've said through the years. It is reciting God's attributes. Secondly, it's reciting His deeds. And, mostly, it's saying thanks for both.

And so forever we will thank God, and that is the very reason that He has saved us. That is the very reason He has delivered us. In order that throughout time and throughout eternity we would give Him thanks. So when you come to the Lord's table, it is a table of thanksgiving. I understand that it is a table of confession, and that was mentioned by Rick in his prayer. I understand that it is a table of remembrance. It reminds us that Jesus died, as if we need a reminder. It is a time for us to do some

heart examination and look at our own sins. But it is also a table of thanks. And if we could tonight, I'd like to focus on the table of thanks as we sing some hymns together and as you prepare your own heart, I want you to come with a thankful heart to the One who has delivered you. And apart from Him, this could not and would not happen.

Father...we do wanna thank You...for delivering us...for rescuing us. And all that that involves, that mighty deed of rescuing us from the fall, rescuing us from sin, rescuing us from the wrath to come, rescuing us from our enemies, and worst and most devastating of whom is Satan. You have indeed rescued us. You have qualified the unqualified. You have redeemed the unredeemable. You have forgiven the unforgivable. You have made holy the utterly unholy...and we thank You and praise You.

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