

The Apostles Prayer 2

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[0 : 0 0] Let's turn over to Colossians chapter 1. Colossians chapter 1. In verse 9, Colossians 1 from verse 9.

For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that you might walk worthy of the Lord and to all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, and to all patient and long-suffering with joyfulness, giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet 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.

Last week we looked at what Paul was praying to God for these Colossians, and we noticed that it was surely something that we would wish for ourselves, and for all our loved ones, who are in the Lord.

This is a prayer for people who are already converted, people who are already Christians, who are already part of the family of God.

He prays that, and this is his great desire, that they might be filled, absolutely filled, with the knowledge of God's will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

[1 : 5 8] And why does he want them to be filled with God's will? That they might walk worthy of the Lord, to please him in every way, in all pleasing.

And what will be the results of this? They'll be fruitful in every good work. They'll be increasing in their knowledge of God himself, as communion.

They'll be strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power. And that strength will be seen in their patience, or endurance, in their long suffering, in the face of provocation, and enjoyfulness, in all of these things.

And then we look finally, at the fourth part of this, walk that was worthy of the Lord, giving thanks unto the Father. And that's really where I want to pick it up this week, just to finish what we never finished last week.

Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving. That's part of what we have been called to do. We cannot walk worthy of the Lord without thanksgiving.

[3 : 1 1] We cannot walk worthy of the Lord in all pleasing. Pleasing him in every way, without thanksgiving. If our life is not adorned by thanksgiving, then we are failing to please God.

Thanksgiving. Paul, you see, is so concerned that the Father should be thanked. You know, sometimes, some of us who are modest, we will do something for another, but we would often say, well, don't bother, don't bother, don't mention it.

But God has never said such a thing. Our Father in Heaven has never said, don't mention it. He wants it to be mentioned.

We should very often say, don't mention it. Because what we really are saying is, we are not worth it. We are so full of false ourselves, and the little we do, we do it so often because it's duty, and all the rest of it.

But not God, you see. God never says, don't mention it, don't thank me. He wants to be thanked. And that's why, through his servant Paul here, he wants that this should be part of the life of the Christian, that it be filled with thanksgiving.

[4 : 48] It's not thanking Paul for what he has done. And I'm sure Paul did a great deal for those Corinthians. that this is Paul wanting God to be thanked.

And that's really a question for all of us. Is our life adorned with thanksgiving? Do we address God as our Father?

That itself is an act of faith. And if we do address him as our Father, do we thank him as our Father for the various things that he has done for us?

What is it that Paul says, the Father has done for us, and that he should be thanked for? Well, in verse 12, he makes it clear, giving thanks unto the Father, who have made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

He has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. An inheritance is something we receive.

[6 : 08] Nobody earns an inheritance in this sense at any rate. An inheritance is a gift given by someone else to us. Then it becomes our possession.

The inheritance that God speaks of here in his word, really include all the blessings of salvation. That's what our inheritance is.

All the blessings of salvation. God himself, fellowship with his Son, sharing in his Spirit, enjoying all the blessings that Christ won for us on the cross, justification, adoption, sanctification, glorification in the future, the communion with the saints here on earth, God's fatherly, protecting presence, his pitying love, all these things.

That's part of our inheritance. But we often, don't we, we tend to look forward and we think, we think, especially, of the new heaven and earth. That whole new world where righteousness swells and that we will inherit as a joint heir with Christ.

Well, that's the inheritance. But this, this inheritance, Paul says, is in light. It's in light. You remember, of course, that God himself is one who dwells in unapproachable light.

[7 : 48] He is the one who has all knowledge. He has all light in that sense. He is someone who is completely pure.

He is bright light in that sense also. And if our future and our presence to some, presence to some degree is to live with God, then we are to live in light.

It's not it. Where are we going? It's much easier for us to think about heaven as a realm of light which is full of the knowledge of God, which is full of self-revelation of God, which is nowhere clouded by any confusion.

That's a realm of light. It's also easy for us, isn't it, to think of heaven as a place which is so pure and stained by any sin or corruption.

no unfaithfulness. Like we read in 1 John chapter 2, if God is light, then we who will be with him, we will be walking in light and we will not sin.

[9 : 12] It will be so pure. You know, I read what Professor Edie said about this. He said that imagine in heaven, he says, God is light, but he says there's no shadows.

It's not a lovely thought. God is light, but there are no shadows in heaven because everyone on whom his light shines, we cleanse.

There is no obstruction to his light, to his glory, to his purity, to his knowledge. everywhere that God is in his realm of glory, no obstruction, no shadows, the light being radiated from every hour, the purity in other words, purity in every part, much in the self-revelation of God.

Well, it's an inheritance of the saints in life and we look at it in heaven, but we must, as Christians, learn to think of ourselves as to some extent already living and enjoying that inheritance.

We must always say it's all ahead of us because that's denying that we are already enjoying the life of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

[10 : 52] That light, you see, that heaven's light, has already shone into our lives. We are already heirs, enjoying the inheritance, enjoying it in the light of God's presence.

Oh, yes, darkness. We know there are many clouds just now. Many clouds come and go and dim that light, sometimes very measurely so, when we sometimes even wonder if the light has dawned on us at all.

But on God's way, he often removes those clouds and gives us such a moment of blessing, when he shines on us with his face, to measures that we hadn't known before.

And now we think perhaps, oh, it would be lovely if that would last. And that's the greatest part of the privilege if we think it will last. As if God is giving us a foretaste, not of temporary blessings, but giving us foretastes of a blessing that will last eternally.

who will be in this inheritance in light, the saints will be. They will all be saints. They will all belong to God.

[12 : 24] That's what the word saint means, separated out, belong to God. And they will all share, share.

how often we hear of in this world itself, we read it in the paper from time to time, families battling over the inheritance, complaining that one didn't get as much as the other, or that one got it all and the other didn't, and so on.

But you know, one of the things that's true about all the saints who are in Christ Jesus, is that they want what they have to be shared by all who are in Christ.

That's what we want, isn't it, for our loving ones. We never say, it's only for me, or it's only for my group, or my community.

We want it to belong to all with whom we share the gospel. we are partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

[13 : 38] So we must give thanks for that. Heaven will be a place of thanksgiving. Heaven will be a place of the new song.

Heaven will be the place where we will sing and our heart will be full of praise. But if the light has come upon us now, shouldn't our thanksgiving begin now?

Each time you mention God as your father by faith, then you must truly thank him that you live in his light, that you share in his inheritance along with the others who are God's people.

God's love. But then Paul says, how did we come to share in this inheritance?

Well, two things. First of all, we have been delivered from the power of darkness in verse 13, and been translated into the kingdom of his dear son.

[14 : 50] Give thanks, he says, because there was a time when you were under the power of darkness. Who's the Lord of darkness?

Satan. Who's the Prince of darkness? Satan. What are the works that he enjoys, those who are dwelling under his power to do?

Works of darkness. Evil works that bear no relation to the light of God's pure glory? Who are the people who live in his realm?

Children of wrath, children of disobedience. Where did you all once live? Those of you who are Christians and who know it, you are able to see that you lived in the power of darkness.

have you reflected on that reason? Have you forgotten where you came from?

[16 : 01] Have you forgotten that your life had so much that was dark in it? So much that was impure? So much that was lacking in the knowledge of God?

you were without hope, without God in the world. Not only that, it's not just that you were in darkness, it's not just the absence of light, you hated the light, you opposed the light, you were against God, you didn't want God.

That's where we come from, darkness. Not only that, but we were under the power of darkness. Could we become free by our own strength?

No. If we were asked to give a show of hands tonight, who set themselves free from that power of darkness?

No one could put their hands up. darkness. Because it's a power, it's an authority. You were under it by the curse of the law, by the wrath of God, and you could not set yourselves free.

[17 : 25] By God's very justice, you and I were under the power of darkness. it was no accident, it was no free happening, it was God's justice that put us under the power of darkness.

Under this way of sin, how many of you, when we speak and share, talk about your loved ones, your loved ones who are still unconverted, who are still under the sway and dominion of sin, who are still under the power of darkness, and some are tempted to say, why?

Why aren't they coming to church? Why aren't they reading their Bible? Why aren't they following the Lord? they were but remember, you were once where they were, and it wasn't you power that set you free.

The power that's reigning in their hearts is greater than they can cope with. They cannot set themselves free, free.

So please, don't make it sound so simple. Remember that you and I were once under the power of darkness, but it was God who delivered us.

[19 : 20] The Father, our Father in heaven delivered us. No one else could do it. no one. He broke the bands asunder.

He set us free. Remember Psalm 107 that we sang. There they were encased in the mental bands. It was because of their own rebelliousness that they cried to the Lord and he set them free.

Then we can give thanks to God for his goodness. have you found that you were delivered from the power of darkness?

But then with the other side we were not just delivered from the power of darkness but we were transplanted or translated into the kingdom of the Son of his love.

When we were delivered we didn't become emigrants going nowhere.

[20 : 33] We were immediately the moment we were set free from sin from darkness we were immediately transplanted into the kingdom of the Son of God's love.

There's no in between place you see. There's no in between land. No. We're either under the power of darkness or we're in the kingdom of the Son of His Love.

When you're under power it's Satan's power in many senses. It's a usurped power power. But when you're in the kingdom of the Son you're under God's rightful King.

You've been deported. That's what the word liberally means. Deported. You know when in the old days when the Bible was first written when an army came to evade like Nebuchad Metz army when they would defeat the people they wouldn't leave them in their land they would transpoken depot transplant these people to another land altogether a land that they never belonged to before they would deliberately take them from one place them in the other well you see that's what God the Father has done for us he's taking us out of the power of darkness and put us under the King under the King his own son so let him pursue what he calls this kingdom the kingdom of the son of his love that's literally what it means here we are his dear son that's a poor translation the kingdom of the son of his love don't you get this idea that you cannot think of the son without thinking of

God's love for the son and without thinking of God's love for us the son of his love and I think of that praise I cannot think surely of Christ without ever thinking of him being loved by the father but also this if we are in the kingdom of the son of his love then we are in the kingdom of his son who was given to us as a measure of God's love for us you know we lived in a loveless country our own country it's very godless and if it's godless it's becoming loveless not we were when we were outside of

[24 : 09] Christ loveless but then we were brought into that kingdom and that kingdom radiates with love one of the things that happens to you when you become a Christian you become very aware of how precious Christ is to the father and you become very aware also of how precious you are to the father that he would give his own beloved son so that you would be saved from sin by by

Christ love love orthodoxy is not enough the right teaching is not enough there should God give his taste of love have you given thanks that you are in the kingdom of the son of his love who of you tonight deserved to be loved by the father who of you deserved to have the Father send his one son to die for you who of you deserved to have your hearts filled with God's love isn't it a wonderful thing that we who didn't deserve to be loved but loathed have been brought into the place where we are loved as Christ is loved isn't that something for which we should give thanks or is it so small a thing to us because we think of it so little but then finally

Paul as he thinks of God's dear son the son of his love he says in whom we have redemption through his blood even the forgiveness of sins why should we give thanks because we are sharing in the inheritance of the saints in light because we've been delivered from the power of darkness because we've been translated into the kingdom of his dear son and because we have been forgiven all our sins redemption that means to be set free absolutely set free set free from the power of darkness set free from the bondage of sin set free from the fear of death set free from the wrath of God set free that's what we are we are redeemed we have redemption and what's the great mark of our redemption forgiveness of sins you know what the word forgiveness means it means release remember the year of the jubilee the year of the jubilee in the old testament it didn't happen every year but every seventh year and every forty ninth year and that breaks of seven if a slave was if somebody had to become a slave because they were too poor to look after themselves or to care for the land or whatever they would become a slave of somebody but then come the year of the jubilee they could be set free they were released and the year where the jubilee horn was sounded out so loud because people were being set free they were being released they were in debt they couldn't pay but their master set them free out of love when you see that's what god does when we become christians we're in debt to god we owe him so much we have dishonored him for year after year it matters to god the debt is mounting day by day with those who are unconverted with each sin the debt grows but the moment they trust in jesus the debt though it be so grave they are released from it they are totally released from the debt they're forgiven because jesus paid the debt for them in whom in jesus we have redemption even the forgiveness of sins the very moment you trust in jesus every sin is part you are released from the debt you owe to god for each and every sin and it happens immediately and once it happens it's done you cannot be forgiven twice for the same sin once you are forgiven it's all forgiven that's why the christian ought to be the happiest creature on earth because

the sins are all forgiven how do you remember tonight for the first time in weeks or months that your sins all forgiven you've been released set free no more do you owe a debt to god no debt but love and even heaven is not conditional on your love for god it's all being paid the debt is gone it was nailed to the cross of jesus christ that any of you who are christian why carry the burden of your sin i beg that you can never pay why not take it all to jesus and leave it with him he'll pay the debt for it so we must give thanks thanks for two things that the father has qualified us to share in this wonderful inheritance and that we have it all in christ he has done it all we can do not the father qualified the father made them meet we didn't earn it and we have it all in christ in christ and with this will close in christ we have redemption the forgiveness of sins not through christ not by christ not because of christ but in christ in union with christ you can never say he just did it for me that won't save you what you have to say is i must have christ and christ must have me we must have a union we must come to be in christ and that's a miracle that's what we can't do that's why we cannot transfer ourselves from being in adam under the couch to being in christ under the blessing we can't perform that change but my friend the father can and the father has for all his people he has put you in christ put you in union with christ but he never thinks of christ without thinking of you and he never thinks of you without thinking of christ there's always that union you are his sons join in because you're in union with christ so don't keep christ at a distance we dare not and if we were as thankful for these things that we should be what a difference it would make to our worship what a difference it would

make to our praise what a difference it would make to our witness to our lifestyle what a difference is it lacking i leave that question with i do also with myself let us pray lord oh god we do thank thee that thou are one who has not failed us we thank thee lord for giving us that inheritance and giving to us in light giving us that blessed sense of thy presence that holy spirit who comes to bring the light of thy purity to effect our wholeness we thank thee lord for delivering us from the power of darkness for sending us free from the evil one we thank thee lord for bringing us into the kingdom of love to the kingdom of christ for shedding thy love abroad in our hearts we thank thee lord for redemption that we have been set free from the bondage of the debt of sin that they are all forgiven we thank thee that there is now no condemnation for them that are in christ jesus because he paid the ransom price and he set the sinner free lord we praise thee for these things may we increase in the knowledge of thy will and thy purpose so that we can praise thee even more from the very depths of our hearts lead us into thy pride of worship for we ask it in jesus name amen