

Who delivered us

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[0 : 0 0] I will turn again to the chapter that we read together, Paul's letter to the Colossian Church, chapter 1, and words that we find in the 13th verse.

We will read it verse 12.

Paul is writing from this prison cell in Rome to the church in Colossae, Colossae being a town in modern Bay, Turkey.

To our knowledge, he had never visited Colossae. Certainly he was not the one responsible for establishing the congregation there.

He himself tells us it was a local man by the name of Epaphras. And Paul is delighted at the news that has come to him from Colossae.

[1 : 3 9] Delighted that these believers are characterized by the three principal Christian graces. That of faith, hope, and love.

The eternal graces. Those that ought to map out and characterize every believer. A believer who is in his and her rightful place ought to be seen as a person who lives by faith and not by sight.

A person who has hope. Not the hope of the hypocrite. Not the false hope.

But the hope of the gospel. Two things can be said with reference to Christian hope. Hope looks forward.

Hope looks forward to all this. And it looks forward to good things to come. It would be a contradiction to say that we hope for something bad.

[2 : 5 2] We hope for good news. And hope has foundations. And then these believers were characterized by the great grace of love.

There was such a unity and a care one for the other. That it was clear and obvious to all of Anwar. That they were closely knit.

And they had a secret. The secret of the love of God in their hearts. They were not citizens of this world.

They were journeying on. They said and confessed that they were pilgrims here. And strangers on the earth. And that is the case with every believer.

Our sojourn. Our time here is temporary. In a little while we will be no more. And the generation to follow us will take our place.

[3 : 5 0] So Paul was encouraged by the news that had come to him about the believers. On the one hand. And on the other he was greatly concerned at the work of the false teachers.

And it wasn't just in Colossae. This morning we were considering for a little. The inroads made by the false teachers and false apostles so called.

At Corinth. And I suppose it's inevitable in a young church. That you'll have inroads made by those who want to spoil.

But then he comes to the words that I would like to consider. Which we put a little tonight. The words. Who have delivered us. From the power of darkness.

And have translated us. Into the kingdom. Of his dear son. Now there are two words there that really are arcane.

[4 : 54] They belong perhaps. Or they would put it this way. They would be better understood. By the older generation. The words delivered.

And translated. Language changes its meaning. From time to time. It's not static.

It's dynamic. And for our purpose tonight. If it be legitimate. I would like to. Change the words. Into modern language.

Not change the meaning. But change the words. So as to understand what this text is saying better. Who have rescued us.

From the kingdom of darkness. And has taken us. Into the kingdom. Into the kingdom. Of his dear son. If you listen to young people.

[5 : 54] Talking among themselves. And will describe. Something as being cruel. They are not referring to temptation. And sometimes you hear them talking about something as being wicked.

It's got nothing whatever to do with morality. And that's their way of communicating and telling one another. What they think. What they think.

Or what they've experienced. Something to be. Who have rescued us. Who have rescued us. The rescue stories.

Are fascinating. Will grip the imagination. They are riveted attention. Feats of heroism.

Thrillers. the story is told of a man from this community who in the first war in the great war as a ship was going down he'd been a non-swimmer and a young galley boy who had no life done the man from this area took his life better and gave it to the young galley boy whose life was saved and the man from back perished tremendous bravery winning our applause sure and in our own day we see from time to time men and women whisking their lives to save their fellows earthquake disasters victims pulled from underneath tons of wobble pot-rolling and mining disasters and men whisking their lives going deep underground to save their films and some rescues sadly not too late the ill-fated Korshk the Russian nuclear submarine stricken on the ocean in bed in the Arctic the men on board perished always in the rescue you have two parties those who require to be rescued and the rescuing party those whose lives are in danger and those who put their lives at risk two parties and you will recall that not all that long ago their own search and rescue helicopter took off on a mission to save a stricken trollerman some way north of the back and in that rescue attempt the crews took the craft to the very edge of its capability to the very edge of its endurance they had to refuel at an oil station at a North Sea oil rig and eventually they hovered above the stricken trollerman where there was one requiring a rescue the Bible the Bible is full of rescue stories recall how Peter on death row waiting in the execution chamber waiting for the sword to come down on his head the following morning

[9 : 54] Peter was rescued a mighty angel was dispatched from heaven with a mission that was successful the prison doors opened the chains fell off Peter was sent a rescue of one man you can recall a fascinating rescue of Jews in fact of the Jewish race exiled in Babylon modern day Iraq the order had been given for ethnic cleansing of the Jews the body of his day was Haman and Haman's fury was such that when Mordecai the Jew failed to bow before him acknowledging his greatness

Mordecai Haman erected a gallus for Mordecai and you recall how when news came to his ears that there would be this mass extermination program effected on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month a message was sent in to Queen Esther from this word of her day and Esther sent back the message the word to Haman I haven't been invited into the king's presence for these past thirty days or so and Haman and she knew fully well what would happen if the queen or anyone else for that matter entered the king's apartment uninvited and word was sent back by Mordecai your cousin to Esther who knows he said with these and these immortal who knows but they will come to the kingdom for such a time as this

God always has his own time for his people to act and when they act in obedience the blessing is theirs and when they fail to act they've fought the blessing and Esther sends back the word to Haman pray for me and I too will pray and I go in and plead on behalf of my people and she says if I perish I perish and we know the outcome the golden scepter of mercy is extended Esther's petition is granted and Haman perishes in the scaffolding that he himself had erected for

Mordecai a remarkable deliverance of rescue of the Jews in exile to to then remember on another on a previous occasion the Jews in Egypt under the cruel hand of Pharaoh the slaves ran their cry ascended to heaven and God heard and a rescuer was found the one who himself had been rescued Moses was a proper child and he was there just at God's appointment with perfect precision and accuracy God had found this man who would lead his own people out from the house of bondage and from the tyranny of

Satan rescue stories the greatest rescue story ever told and that ever shall be told is found in the scriptures and it involves you and me if I say to you that your life tonight is in imminent heaven you are in a position of fearful danger I'm sure that you turn around and say to me I don't sense any danger I have no fear of an intruder walking through these doors this isn't Pakistan it's not the Sudan this is back free church and this building the greatest danger is the hidden danger the one that you cannot see that's how

[15 : 44] Al Qaeda operate you don't know who they are or where they are going to strike next the hidden danger the unseen enemy and as an enemy at work tonight he is skillful in his own art of deception and is well used to employing weapons of mass destruction he is an expert at it so much so that ever since paradise was lost on the earth men have been blinded by him he has fuked the human ways he has given many names in scripture and in the context of tonight's talk he is known as the god of this world the god who has blinded the mind of those who do not believe the enemy is spiritual he is unseen yet he is active writing to another church this same author penned these words all foolish galatians who has bewitched you that you should not avail of you bewitched enchanted a spell cast over the mind and you know what it's like when you're in a crowded building you become drowsy and never more so than when the gospel is preached slumber overtakes you you lose your concentration and all kinds of suggestions come to your mind and you cannot dismiss them you are bewitched now bewitching takes place in the animal kingdom it's well known that one animal can affect another animal with the power of its eye sheep dog anguish no whole well but a good sheepdog with a strong eye will move any flock of sheep it is said of the water snake that when it's ready for its next meal it lies motionless in the pond until it makes eye contact to the frog and it just waits there and then it opens its mouth and in walks the frog into the jaws of death bewitched that's what the snake does and it's got its next meal and that's what the enemy does to the soul it bewitches he bewitches he casts his enchanting spell and he holds his prey captive without them realizing it

Paul's words are so significant rescued from the power of darkness that's one feature of this kingdom of darkness its leader is skillful and he knows exactly how to use his weapons and when it's a kingdom Job tells us that there's no order in it it's characterized by disorder darkness darkness and if it's darkness there's no light in it and if there's no light there's death so death has drained in this kingdom from the time that man fell bewitched captive ensnared by Satan the great question arises who would rescue him was there anybody out there who could effect this rescue well the answer came from within the Godhead there was none in heaven or on earth or under the earth

John tells us in Revelation who was worthy to open the books not one all of the works none in heaven or on earth or under the earth he was worthy to open the books where was this one to come from and this is where the wisdom this is where uncreated wisdom shines most bright one came into being he was not in being in the fullness of time the son of God was born and his name said the angel to his mother shall be called Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins he came to be said one what he was not in order without ceasing to be what he was ever the second person of the trinity all was so but he became man and in that wonderful year of joining humanity to his divinity he came as the rescuer of his people see him the champion of our faith going going out to meet the prince of darkness in the greatest combat that this world has ever known the combatants are two on the one hand the prince of darkness and on the other the prince of life there had been several engagements between the two the prince of darkness had attempted more than once to destroy the lord Jesus in his infancy and he employed herald as the would be executioner but he was thwarted and then in a momentous temptation in the wilderness all alone for forty long days and forty long nights contending with the wild beasts alone in the desert and the wildest of all the beasts the prince of darkness the saviour overcame but see him now at the end of his life and see him in the garden you might say at the execution chamber the night on which he was betrayed see him coming out in a bloody sweat and as he meets the foe next day and he engages him face to face see the triumph of the champion of our faith he triumphed over all the works of darkness to this end was he born did he not say for this reason I have come into the world to destroy the works of the devil to overcome the powers of darkness and was it not in the darkness that he finally overcame them for we read that there was darkness over the face of the earth from the sixth hour until the ninth hour and the champion of our faith defeated the enemy of souls was it a mortal blow that he

used that day it is said of the gangster the Chicago gangster Al Capone the one who ruled Chicago in the thirties and was subsequently caught and imprisoned it is said that even behind the prison bar Al Capone's influence was felt through the city he had his minions he himself been chained and it is so in the spiritual and the moral world the prince of darkness has been defeated by the savior but he still exercises his power and he has control albeit limited in the old testament era he kept the gentile world under darkness but since the resurrection the gospel has reached out as we know to the far corners of the earth and to the islands of the sea including our own so that tonight we know that there is a savior who is able to rescue the perishing let's return to our helicopter rescue there they are there it is hovering over this stricken troll the winchman is lower and his feet touch deck a heavy sea is running and he's there with a harness ready to rescue the man whose hand has been bad and severed imagine a skills if the trollman said to him i would prefer to stay on ship i've managed to fool the stench of blood it was not as bad as i had feared what ingratitude the rescue helicopter crew having risked their lives in order to save this man's life only to be told with five minutes of pure love only to be told no thank you i prefer to stay in a ship what ingratitude is that you my unkind of friend Jesus not only risked his life but he gave his life he gave his life for once and for the minute and are you happy and content to stay in your own little boat well if you are you will perish there is no further hope of rescue for you the rescuer has come the operation is finished the victory is accomplished and the savior has returned to heaven the one who rescues us from the power of darkness and takes us into the kingdom of his dear son what are the features of that kingdom the very opposite of that of the

kingdom of darkness instead of darkness you have light instead of disorder you have order and death gives way to life life in all its fullness life that begins here and continues hereafter it is otherwise known as the kingdom of grace the grace that transforms lives the grace that will turn the world and has turned the world upside down a revolutionary grace the person is never the same again after he's been rescued some say it's pie in the sky well if it is you want to describe it as pie in the sky

[30 : 18] I will say it tastes good and it's going to get better the kingdom of grace will be transformed into the kingdom of glory and the paradise on earth that disappeared has been regained and there shall be a new heavens and a new earth wherein righteousness shall dwell and the prince of darkness will never again be heard the scripture is very draft in its language when it says concerning him he will be cast into the bottomless pit and the tragedy is that those who refuse the offer of question of salvation will be with him bottomless nowhere for your feet to land on but for those who have been lost he takes them from the pit as we have been saying and from the miry clay when he sets their feet on a rock he puts a new song in the mouth who is like him not one

I heard recently and we bless God for the movement of the spirit in these days particularly amongst the young I heard recently of a first year girl whose sister sixth year sister had been converted in the profession of faith in Christ this young girl said to her teacher was it wrong miss to be jealous is it wrong to be jealous and the teacher knew full well what the young girl was getting at she was jealous of her older sister now sitting at the Lord's table now a Christian do you want to be saved I'm sure if you were to reply audibly everybody in here would say yes only the fool would say yes

I would love to be saved is the desire in your heart to be saved and as we mentioned this morning in connection with desire wherever there are desire for the things of God with regard to salvation he will never disappoint or frustrate that desire he will get it I may desire many and the answer may be but with regard to salvation he will not turn away any who come to him you come to him tonight as you are say to him that you need to be rescued and you have heard of the greatest rescue all be it in faltering tones the greatest rescue that this world has ever seen Jesus Christ is a great savior there is no other man given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved let us pray father bless and bless you stood and he finished the work that he has effected salvation for all who come to him and for those who come not one shall be cast out we bless thee that tonight he is the Lamb in the midst of the throne whose praise is a song by those who once stood here and who joined in the worship of thy church here below now sing that song everlasting we pray that it might be true concerning each one here from the very youngest to the oldest gather us in that we too might be rescued and sing his praise forever we give thanks for thy goodness to us for thy blessing and for thy presence with us here tonight in which your lives we pray far beyond our deserving and our lasting

Amen