



Good News That Brings Growth

[1:9-14]

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“For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to 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” (1:9-14).

What greater joy comes to a young husband and wife than the experience of having a baby? The new mother counts the toes and fingers of her baby to make sure they are all present. She carefully checks the baby for any noticeable birth marks. Everything is important regarding her baby.

Although a baby possesses all the physical attributes he needs, he will have to develop, learn, and mature. The baby will not grow any more arms or feet or another head. He does not need them. He will just develop the use of what he possesses.

Paul used that same idea to impress upon the Colossian brethren their need for growth as he wrote to them. He used the idea of their

being saints in the kingdom of light and of their receiving the forgiveness of sins in Christ as the beginning or birth point of their Christian journey. But they needed to develop, they needed to mature.

They were doing many things well. He had complimented them on their love, faith, and hope. Paul had heard about their growth in Christ, and he was moved to pray for them. What a wonderful thought! Are you moved to prayer when you hear of the good others are doing? Do you pray for them that they may increase even more in their good works?

THE CHRISTIAN’S PURSUIT (1:9-12)

Paul prayed that the church in Colossae might be blessed in five ways.

In Knowledge

Paul asked that they be “filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding” (1:9b). He also prayed that they may be “increasing in the knowledge of God” (1:10c).

A newborn infant cannot grow adequately without proper nutrition. This is also true for a newborn Christian. If you are to develop into the person God desires you to be, you must have the proper food. That food is knowledge which comes by a careful study of God’s Word. Since we cannot be healthy or grow spiritually without knowledge, a study of the Bible should be high

on our list of important tasks. We should work constantly to increase our knowledge of God's Word so that we can grow spiritually.

In Godliness

Paul prayed that the Colossians would "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects" (1:10a). His desire was that they should live in a way that reflected God's holiness. The church today needs to be what it claims to believe. We have the responsibility to "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord," and we must walk "to please Him in all respects."

Does your life match your belief? Are you what you claim to be? Do people who know you identify your lifestyle with Christ? Do you glorify Jesus in the way you live?

In Fruitfulness

Paul prayed that they might be "bearing fruit in every good work" (1:10b). Other passages also urge us to bear fruit:

So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith (Galatians 6:10).

Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed (Titus 3:1).

Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work (2 Timothy 2:21).

Are you fruitful in good works? In order to be fruitful, seed must be planted. Are you planting seed? In what good works are you involved? Are they works that glorify God?

In Strength

Paul prayed for them to be "strengthened with all power" (1:11a). This phrase is not talking about physical strength. Physical exercise is important, but it is not all important. "For bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come" (1 Timothy 4:8). The kind of strength Paul is talking about shows up in steadfastness, patience, and thanksgiving (1:11b). Every congregation and individual needs to pray for greater spiritual strength.

In Gratitude

"Giving thanks unto the Father" (1:12a) is one sure sign of spiritual growth. We must be aware of what God has done and is doing for us and be deeply grateful. Thankful hearts which are ruled by peace will serve with gladness.

We must develop the practice of praying for each other in these areas. Paul has provided a beautiful outline of what our prayers for congregations and individuals should be.

THE CHRISTIAN'S PROVISIONS (1:12, 13)

Next, Paul introduced a new thought, one that should motivate us to greater growth and service. It is the idea of an inheritance. We have become heirs of God. Paul said God "has qualified us to share in the inheritance" (1:12b).

Our newspapers have recently listed bank accounts that are lying unclaimed. Many who read the papers read the list carefully to see if their names happened to be in it.

Tracers of America is a company employing over four hundred people for the express purpose of tracing lost heirs. Multitudes of estates in the United States go unclaimed because the heirs are missing. This company is in business to find those missing heirs.

An old legend tells of an old lonely man who one cold dark night wandered along the Rhine River. Thinly dressed and half starved, he noticed a huge mansion brightly lit. As he came nearer, he could see the warm fire burning in the fireplace, the table laden with food, and hear the music as it floated out on the breezes of the night. Driven by hunger and cold, he knocked upon the door to beg for shelter for the night. An old servant answered the door and through the weathered face recognized the long lost heir to the mansion and estate. Here was a man wandering without any idea that he would be warmed, filled with food, and comfortable because he suddenly became quite wealthy.

Paul said that God has qualified Christians to share in the inheritance of the saints of light. What good news! This inheritance is spoken of in several other passages. Ephesians 1:11 says, "Also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will." The background of this text shows that Christ is all and in all. All things gathered together in Him. In Him we have obtained this inheritance.

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory (Ephesians 1:13, 14).

For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God (Ephesians 5:5).

Knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance (3:24).

And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance (Hebrews 9:15).

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you (1 Peter 1:3, 4).

Being qualified for this inheritance means I have been approved and accepted by God. I have not been accepted because of who I am but because of *whose* I am. I have not been accepted because of what I have done but because of *where* I am (in Christ). In Him, we have the forgiveness of sins. In Him, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. In Him, we are begotten.

According to our text we are "qualified." The KJV has "made us meet." The original word means "fit, suitable, sufficient." God has made you suitable for this inheritance. He "made" you fit for it. I could never qualify on my own. He had to qualify me! We share in that inheritance with all the saints, those who are obedient to Christ and trust in Him.

THE CHRISTIAN'S POSITION (1:13, 14)

Paul declared that Christians have been translated into the kingdom of light. The light symbolizes holiness. Christians are to be the light of the world (Matthew 5:14). Jesus was the light of men (John 1:14). Christ's kingdom is light, and the kingdom of the world is darkness. Those who wear the characteristics of the world, the spirit of selfishness, the mantle of hatred, are in darkness (1 John 2:8, 9). Saints are "in light" (1:12c).

What a marvelous privilege to be in the light! We were "delivered" from the power of darkness, and we were "translated into the kingdom of His dear Son" (1:13). The domain of darkness was the sinful life we were living until Christ came and delivered us. Remember someone had to deliver, translate, or transfer us. We could not do it ourselves.

We were held in bondage, in slavery. Now we have been redeemed. The very word "redeemed" carries with it the idea that we were slaves. Slaves cannot free themselves. They cannot purchase themselves. One slave cannot purchase another slave. The one who redeems must be free and must possess the purchase price.

We were held in slavery until Christ came. He, and He alone, possessed the purchase price. In Him, we have redemption.

. . . you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price . . . (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20).

In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (1:14).

How grateful we should be for the redemption of our souls.

We have the forgiveness of sins, a blessing without which there is no salvation.

And Peter said to them, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

And now why do you delay? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name (Acts 22:16).

. . . To Him who loves us, and released us from our sins by His blood (Revelation 1:5).

What a marvelous privilege to have our sins washed away! The blood of Jesus washes away our sins at the point of baptism.

CONCLUSION

How important it is to have that knowledge, strength, and desire to walk in a way that is pleasing to the Lord! The developing of all the characteristics He wants us to have makes us complete in Him. How thankful we should be for what Christ has done! He has qualified us to inherit the kingdom of light!