



THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Lesson Number 17



TRANSLATION LEGEND: ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ESV=English Standard Version (2001), KJV=King James Version (1611), NKJV=New King James Version (1982), NAB=New American Bible, NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible, NLT=New Living Translation, NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862).

----- Bible Translation Codes with Identification -----

LET IT HAPPEN!

“ 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. 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. ¹⁷ And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” ^{KJV} (Col 3:15-17)

INTRODUCTION

The New Covenant is one of intimacy and involvement – where the people know the Lord, and the Lord knows them. Of this covenant, the Lord says, “they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them” (Jer 31:34). Jesus said of the constituents of this new covenant, “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of Mine” (John 10:14). And again, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me” (John 10:27). All of them are “taught by God” (John 6:45).

There are numerous terms that

are unique to the New Covenant – expressions that denote a closeness to the Lord, and holy involvements with both the Father and the Son. Some of them “justification” (Rom 4:25), “reconciliation” (Heb 2:17), and “fellowship” (1 Cor 1:9). Ponder the glory of phrases like “laborers together with God” (1 Cor 3:9), “joined to the Lord” (1 Cor 6:17), and “joint heirs with Christ” (Rom 8:17). Those in Christ are referred to as “the temple of God” (1 Cor 3:16,17), “an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph 2:22), and “the body of Christ” (1 Cor 12:27). They are “dead to sin” and “alive unto God” (Rom 6:11), having been

“delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son” (Col 1:13).

This is the language of participation, involvement, and engagement! It is no wonder that we are said to be “partakers of Christ” (Heb 3:14), “partakers of the Divine nature” (2 Pet 1:4), and “partakers of the heavenly calling” (Heb 3:1). The New Covenant is a covenant of participation. Those who are within it are described as having been “enlightened,” and having “tasted of the heavenly gift,” “made partakers of the Holy Spirit,” “tasted the good Word of

OUTLINE

- ▶ LET THE PEACE OF GOD (3:15a)
- ▶ CALLED ON ONE BODY (3:15b)
- ▶ BE YE THANKFUL (3:15c)
- ▶ THE INDWELLING WORD OF CHRIST (3:16a)
- ▶ TEACHING AND ADMONISHING ONE ANOTHER (3:16b)
- ▶ PSALMS AND HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS (3:16c)
- ▶ SINGING WITH GRACE (3:16d)
- ▶ THE FOCUS OF WORDS AND DEEDS (3:17a)
- ▶ GIVING THANKS TO GOD (3:17d)

God,” and “tasted of the powers of the world to come” (Heb 6:4-5).

NOT LIKE THE OLD COVENANT

This language confirms the nature of the New Covenant. **Unlike the Old Covenant, it is not one of aloofness, where the people could not draw near.** At Mount Sinai, when the Lord summoned Moses to the top of the mount, He said: “*And Moses alone shall come near the LORD: but they shall not come nigh; neither shall the people go up with him*” (Ex 24:2). Of the people themselves it is written, “*And the people stood afar off*” (Ex 20:21). The nature of that covenant is epitomized in the solemn words concerning the people’s proximity to the place where God was being made known. “*And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: there shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount*” (Ex 19:12-13). **That was the nature of the Old Covenant – a covenant of distance in which the people could not come to God.**

When the children of Israel marched into the promised land, the ark of the covenant, carried by the Levites, went before the people. Yet, as the people followed, they were required to do so afar off – as minimum distance of one

thousand yards – the length of ten football fields. “*Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore*” (Josh 3:4). **That was the nature of the Old Covenant – a covenant of distance.**

The New Covenant is not like the Old Covenant. The Lord said of it, “*Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD*” (Jer 31:31-32; Heb 8:8-9). The New Covenant is of another order. It is not a covenant that centers in laws and commandments. A covenant that revolves around commandments assumes the alienation of those to whom, it is addressed. There are commandments associated with the New Covenant, but they also are of a different order.

The New Covenant is one of nearness, closeness, and intimacy. Ponder the many affirmations that accentuate this glorious reality.

- ✦ “*By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God*” (Rom 5:2).
- ✦ “*But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ*” (Eph 2:13).
- ✦ “*And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father*” (Eph 2:17-18).

✦ “*In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him*” (Eph 3:12).

✦ “*For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God*” (Heb 7:19).

✦ “*Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water*” (Heb 10:22).

✦ “*Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you*” (James 4:8).

Such sacred privileges were not vouchsafed to those under the Old Covenant. Their nature prohibited them from coming close to the Lord, and the laws through which they were governed maintained that distance.

But is it not so for those who are in Christ Jesus. Having been cleansed from all unrighteousness and reconciled to God, we can now come with boldness into His presence.

ACCESS IS ESSENTIAL

Access to God is essential if we are to appropriate the benefits provided in Christ Jesus. None of them can be obtained at a distance from the Lord. It is written that God’s Divine power has given us “*all things that pertain to life and godliness.*” However they can only be appropriated “*through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue*” (2 Pet 1:3). **That is, they can only be obtained within the framework of Divine intimacy, and involvement with the One who has given them.**

To put it another way, “*all spiritual blessings*” have been deposited, as it were, “*in heavenly places.*” That, of

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course, is precisely what the Spirit says: *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ”* (Eph 1:3). They are not thrown to, or showered upon, us from these lofty realms. Rather, God has *“raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus”* (Eph 2:6). It is from that position that we obtain the blessings – a posture of closeness and participation.

THE REASON FOR SAYING THIS

It is necessary to say these things because of the nature of the text before

us. These admonitions are not delivered from Mount Sinai, but from Mount Zion. They assume a closeness to the Lord, and cannot possibly be fulfilled while remaining in spiritually distant places. It is said of those who choose to dwell at a distance from the Lord, *“They also who dwell in the farthest parts are afraid of Your signs”*^{NKJV} (Psa 65:8). **That is, the further a person is from the Lord, the more intimidating the marvelous provisions and works of God become.** There is not the faintest notion of the blessings of God being accessible when one is found in such distant places. This explains much of the lack of interest

concerning the things of God that is prevalent in the modern church. It is simply too far away from God to see any relevance in His Word, or accessibility in His promises.

However, our text assumes you are near to the Lord, for there is no other way the things it mentions can take place. If you are not close to the Lord, then set out now to get close. **That is what salvation is all about. It is why Christ died, and it is the reason for His faithful intercession.** The aim is to bring you to God, washed, sanctified, justified, and fully acceptable.

LET THE PEACE OF GOD

“3:15a And let the peace of God rule in your hearts . . .”

This is a continuation of the exhortation to *“put on the new man”* (3:10). It is a requirement of spiritual life, which cannot be maintained without fulfilling this word. Men tend to minimize what God requires in Christ Jesus, so the

provision. Rather, the desired result will be accomplished when we thrust from us inhibiting influences, and appropriate the resources provided for us in Christ Jesus.

The word *“Let”* describes a certain requirement in spiritual life. **The things that are received from God must be allowed to work within us.** God will

✚ *“Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness”* (Rom 13:12a).

✚ *“Let us put on the armor of light”* (Rom 13:12b).

✚ *“Let us walk honestly, as in the day”* (Rom 13:13).

✚ *“Let us not therefore judge one another any more”* (Rom 14:13).

✚ *“Let us therefore follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another”* (Rom 14:19).

✚ *“Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification”* (Rom 15:2).

✚ *“Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth”* (1 Cor 10:24).

✚ *“Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into rest, any of you should seem to come short of it”* (Heb 4:1).

✚ *“Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest”* (Heb 4:11).

✚ *“Let us hold fast our profession”* (Heb 4:14).

✚ *“Let us therefore come boldly to the*

Here the idea is that by putting off “the old man” and putting on “the new man,” an allowance will be made for the peace of God to rule in our hearts.

Spirit presses the matter upon us. What has been provided for you in Christ Jesus **MUST** be obtained if we are to survive and advance in the faith!

LET

“And let . . .” Nearly all versions and paraphrases read the same. Only the New Jerusalem Bible reads, *“And may.”* Here the idea is that **by putting off “the old man” and putting on “the new man,” an allowance will be made for the peace of God to rule in our hearts.** The thought is not merely that we “let” in the sense of allowing it to happen, or consenting to this gracious

not coerce us into living godly. This would bring no glory to Him, nor would it bring genuine profit to us.

Anything that obstructs that work must be removed, *“put off,”* or *“cast away.”* Think of its many expressions in the epistles.

✚ *“Let God be true”* (Rom 3:4).

✚ *“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body”* (Rom 6:12).

✚ *“Let love be without dissimulation”* (Rom 12:9).

throne of all grace" (Heb 4:16).

- ✦ "Let us go on to perfection" (Heb 6:1).
- ✦ "Let us draw near with a true heart, in the full assurance of faith" (Heb 10:22).
- ✦ "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering" (Heb 10:23).

All of these exhortations, and many more, represent the manner of the Kingdom. This is how "newness of life" reacts in this world. **The challenge to "let" them happen is a summons to rid ourselves of any and all competing and hindering influences in order that we may obtain what Jesus provides for us.** In summary, if we will, in fact, "put off the old man" and "put on the new man," we will "let" these things take place.

THE PEACE OF GOD

"... the peace of God..." Later versions of Scripture read "peace of Christ."^{NASB/NIV/NRSV} There is no conflict in the expressions, for God's peace is given to us by Christ Jesus. It is God's peace, originated by Him, and possessed in Himself. The Lord Jesus is the distributor of it, and He Himself possessed it while on earth as a Man. **He is the official custodian of this peace, and therefore it is said to belong to Him.** Of it Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

This is not a peace after the manner of this world. It is not induced by psychological principles or medication. It is not the result of ignoring realities, or pretending that they do not exist. It is not simply the cessation of trouble, such as a peaceful environment.

The "peace of God" is transcendent to all human understanding. It cannot be explained by human wisdom, or comprehended with the natural mind. Therefore we read, "And the peace of God, which **passeth all understanding**," or "surpasses all comprehension"^{NASB} (Phil 4:7). That is, it cannot be discovered by intellectual research or the professed

logical reasonings of men.

"The peace of God" is an inward quietness or tranquility. It is a rational tranquility, where even thoughts cannot trouble the soul, for it is based upon the reasoning of faith. Although, being justified by faith, we "have peace with God" (Rom 5:1), that is not the emphasis of this peace. **This is the experiential repose and calmness that results from that peace.** This involves a sense of acceptance, safety, and adequacy, and the world cannot touch it.

This peace comes "from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3; Eph 1:2; Eph 6:23; Phil 1:2; Col 1:2; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:2; 1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 1:2; Tit 1:4;

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Phile 1:32 John 1:3). Every person who is justified receives this peace. However, the reception of it is not enough. **There must be a faithful response to this gift of peace.** We must permit it to do its marvelous work by putting off the old man, and putting on the new man.

Too often, professed believers leave the impression that the grace of God works automatically, independently of participation in the work. This is a wholly erroneous view that disarms the soul and gives the advantage to the devil.

RULE IN YOUR HEARTS

"... rule in your hearts..." Other versions read, "preside in your hearts,"^{DARBY} "control your hearts,"^{NAB} and "reign in your hearts."^{NJB}

The word "rule" means "1) to be an umpire 2) to decide, determine 3) to direct, control, rule."^{THAYER} "To be umpire in public games, hence preside, direct, control."^{ROBERTSON} **This is not ruling in the sense of a dictator, but ruling in the sense of a judge in a court of law – determining what is best, and deciding the best course in multiple**

alternatives.

The idea is, "Let peace make the decision," or "choose so that peace may continue to govern your heart." It is possible to choose a course of action that causes confusion, hardship, and defeat. **When we let the peace of God rule, we allow it to choose a path that does not disrupt Divine fellowship, or the unity of the Spirit.** Follow the path that enables you to maintain accord with God and enjoy His favor.

The soul of man is subject to all manner of contradicting moods. Thus David addressed His soul: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his

countenance" (Psa 42:5). Rather than being disquieted, the sweet Psalmist yearned for the quietness and confidence that comes when the peace of God rules the heart. As it is written, "For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not" (Isa 30:15).

There is no price too great to be paid in order to the realization of this ruling peace. As simple as it may appear, many a soul chooses a course of action or a way of life that makes no room for the peace of God. It is of no consequence to such people that they have no confidence toward God, or that they are constantly dismayed by their enemies and various circumstances. They have chosen to live with God in the background of their life. **Our text urges us to zealously avoid such folly, and choose to walk in the light, in faith, and in the Spirit.**

Letting the peace of God rule our hearts is another view of not quenching or grieving the Spirit (Eph 4:30; 1 Thess 5:19). It is another way of saying "refuse

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the evil and choose the good" (Isa 7:15-16), or abhorring what is evil, and cleaving to what is good (Rom 12:9).

This is "*perfect peace*" that cannot be troubled by circumstance. As it is written, "*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee*" (Isa 26:3). It is a peace, or tranquility, that men cannot trouble: "*When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?*" (Job 34:29). Are you willing to let this peace rule in your hearts – to be a sort of arbiter of what you do? You will not regret letting it

rule your heart.

SUMMATION OF PEACE

The peace that comes from God through Jesus Christ is to sit as an arbiter upon the throne of our hearts. It is to make the decision concerning the choices that we must make. Whatever disturbs our communion with the Lord must be told "*NO!*" Whatever promotes and maintains that marvelous communion must be told "*YES!*"

Spiritual life, which is another way of saying "*peace with God,*" must be

maintained at all cost. Whatever makes us dull and insensitive to the Lord is lethal. Unless it is overcome, such influences will eventually result in us being expelled from the Divine presence.

There is a form of religion that is becoming increasingly popular in our nation that allows people to live at a distance from the Lord. Those who embrace this Satanic fabrication think little or nothing of living without a due regard for the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. They are too close to the world, and too sympathetic with its manners and judgments. For them, seen things are transcendent to things that are "*not seen*" (2 Cor 4:16-18). This is an error of the greatest magnitude, for we have been called to peace – to walk in harmony with the Lord Jesus. Where that harmony is lacking, nothing else is acceptable. There is no imagined virtue that can compensate for an aloofness from the Living God.

CALLED IN ONE BODY

^{15b} . . . to the which also ye are called in one body . . . "

The Holy Spirit now connects human duty with Divine purpose. **Believers are never admonished to do something God has not intended for them to do.** They are always told to conduct themselves in strict keeping with the purpose that authored their salvation.

TO THE WHICH ALSO YE ARE CALLED

" . . . to the which also ye are called. . . " Other versions read, "*to which indeed you were called,*" ^{NASB} "*you were called to,*" ^{NIV} "*as it was the purpose of God for you,*" ^{BBE} "*to which also ye have been called,*" ^{DARBY} "*wherein also you are called,*" ^{DOUAY} "*the peace into which you were also called,*" ^{NAB} "*you were called to peace,*" ^{NIB} and "*you are called to live in peace.*" ^{NLT}

In salvation we are not only called from something, but to something. Traditionally, the institutional church has not done well identifying what we have been called to.

This is, however, a very critical aspect of our salvation. **Unless it is comprehended to some measurable degree, the salvation of God will not be viewed with any genuine seriousness and commitment.**

- ✚ We are "*called to be saints*" (Rom 1:7).
- ✚ We are "*called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord*" (1 Cor 1:9).
- ✚ We have been "*called unto liberty*" (Gal 5:13).
- ✚ We are "*called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb*" (Rev 19:9).
- ✚ We have been "*called*" "*unto His kingdom and glory*" (1 Thess 2:12).
- ✚ We are "*called*" "*unto holiness*" (1 Thess 4:7).
- ✚ God has "*called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus*" (1 Pet 5:10).

- ✚ God has "*called us to glory and virtue*" (2 Pet 1:3).
- ✚ We have been "*called*" to "*lay hold on eternal life*" (1 Tim, 6:12).
- ✚ We are "*called in one hope of our calling*" (Eph 4:4).

A calling that does not result in its intended objective is pointless – like being called, but not chosen (Matt 22:14). Those who are called, therefore, are expected to be "*saints,*" in fellowship with Christ, walking in "*liberty,*" and ultimately present at "*the marriage supper of the Lamb.*" They have been called to be in God's kingdom and glory, to be holy, and to participate in His eternal glory. They are expected to lay hold on eternal life, and to live in the expectation of the hope to which they have been called. No other results are acceptable.

In this text, "*peace*" is the objective to which we have been called – **a peace that rules in our hearts.** We are

expected to live with a mind to maintaining our fellowship with Christ. Our decisions are to be made in the interest of God's glory, and with a mind to allow nothing to come between us and God. This is not a matter of heartless law, but of Divine intention. **Peace is the environment in which God performs His work within us.** It is the framework in which we grow up and mature in Jesus (Eph 4:15). If this is not happening, the profession of being of Christ is vain, and will not be honored by God.

This is **not** intended to wrap the truth in a mantel of fear. It is meant to show how serious the Lord is about His great salvation. It was procured at a great price, and is to be so regarded by all who profess to enjoy it.

We have been called to peace – to peace with God primarily, and with one another secondarily. Peace with God involves uninterrupted consistent and communion. We have **not** been called to come into the Lord's presence seasonally, as the high priest of old, who appeared before the Lord "once a year" (Ex 30:10; Lev 16:34; Heb 9:7). **Now that a reconciliation has been effected by the Lord Jesus, aloofness from the Living God no longer acceptable.** We have been "called" into peace – peace that has resulted from the veil of separation being "torn in two from top to bottom" (Matt 27:54). **To remain apart from the presence of the Lord will now exclude one from Divine favor.**

IN ONE BODY

" . . . in one body . . . " Other versions read, "as members of one body," ^{NIV} "for you to be one body," ^{BBE} and "called together in one body." ^{NJB}

Here the Spirit addresses the matter of the environment in which the peace to which we have been called is realized. While salvation is personal, it is not merely personal. Much is made of this in Scripture.

✚ "So we, being many, are **one body** in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom 12:5).

✚ "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. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into **one body**, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For **the body** is not one member, but many" (1 Cor 12:14).*

*fillet all in all" (Eph 1:23). The intimacy between Him and the "members of His body" is seen in these words: "For we are members of **His body, of His flesh, and of His bones**" (Eph 5:30). While later versions omit the last clause of this verse ("of His flesh, and of His bones"), there is a clear allusion to the words of Adam*

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✚ "But now are they many members, yet but **one body**" (1 Cor 12:20).

✚ "And that he might reconcile both unto God in **one body** by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph 2:16).

Here, in the body of Christ, is where the peace to which we have been called is brought to fruition.

The walk of faith is developed within the context of the fellowship of the saints. In fact, we have been "called in one body" for this unique purpose – that Christ might minister to us through that very body. This circumstance is in sharp variance with the view of "the church" that dominates the Western world. Spiritual Babylon has promoted a view of the church that makes the institution the fundamental thing, not the advantages of the people themselves. It is the same mind-set the world employs in corporations, businesses, and other financial considerations. It is the enrichment of the organization that is primary. Its name and impressiveness ranks very high, while the personal advancement of the individuals within it are of secondary concern.

Unique Intimacy

But this is not the manner of the Kingdom of God. Christ's people are called "**His body, the fulness of Him that**

when he was presented with Eve: "And Adam said, **This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man**" (Gen 2:23). However, the seemingly learned arguments about this expression being omitted from certain manuscripts falls to the ground with a frightful thud when we consider the words that follow the text: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh" (Eph 5:31).

In the Ephesians text, the Holy Spirit is reasoning with us concerning "the body of Christ" by pointing primarily to Adam and Eve. The Lord made Eve from a part of Adam – "one of his ribs" (Gen 2:21). The Scripture is very precise on this matter: "And the LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man" ^{NASB} (Gen 2:22). Knowing this, Adam confessed, "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh." It is as though he said, "Eve is part of me – we are 'one flesh.'" Using this as a basis of reasoning, the Spirit says we are "of His flesh and of His bone." That is, we are part of Him.

The Glory of Being Called

The experience of salvation is described in a variety of ways – each of them exposing us to a facet of salvation's glory. Here is a sampling of them.

Our lives in this world are not divorced from our life in Christ. Here are areas in which peace and joy can be cultured– by Given O. Blakely

- ✚ **OBEDIENCE.** Obeyed the Gospel (Rom 10:16).
- ✚ **ADDITION.** Added to the church (Acts 2:47).
- ✚ **DELIVERANCE.** Delivered from the power of darkness (Col 1:13a).
- ✚ **TRANSFERRED.** Translated into the Kingdom of God’s dear Son (Col 1:13b).
- ✚ **BAPTISM.** Baptized into Christ (Gal 3:27). “
- ✚ **RAISED UP.** Raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph 2:6).
- ✚ **REPENTANCE.** Granted repentance unto life (Acts 11:18).

exposition. The saints should hear of them frequently in order *“to the praise of the glory of His grace”* (Eph 1:6).

Our text declares yet another marvelous view of our salvation. **We were “called in one body” for the experience of peace.** We were not called for a strictly personal identity with God, but for an effective unity with Christ’s body. We were called to participate in this marvelous arrangement.

“Body” is a term denoting life, functionality, and interdependence – many parts, yet a single entity. There is a reason for this arrangement. Christ does not pour His total person into any single individual – although no believer is capable of imagining how much of Christ they are capable of experiencing. The

according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love” (Eph 4:15b-16).

- ✚ **Spiritual gifts are designed to profit all of the body.** *“And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal”* (1 Cor 12:6-7).
- ✚ **All things, including various ministers, belong to the members.** *“Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s”* (1 Cor 3:21-23).

We are categorically told that Christ’s body is “the fulness of Him that filleth all in all” (Eph 1:23). That is, He shares His nature and His truth with individuals THROUGH His body.

With these things in mind, how marvelous is the statement of our text: *“the peace of Christ . . . to which indeed you were called in one body . . .”* ^{»NASB} (Col 3:15). Who is able to measure the glory of such a marvelous call – a call *“in one body.”* **That is, we actually became “the called”** (Rom 1:6; 8:28) **when we were inducted into the body of Christ.** As it is written, *“For by one Spirit are we all **baptized into one body**, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit”* (1 Cor 12:13).

- ✚ **TURNING.** Turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God (Acts 26:18). Turning to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven (1 Thess 1:9).
- ✚ **BORN AGAIN.** Being born again (John 3:3-5; 1 Pet 1:23; James 1:18).
- ✚ **HEART OPENED.** The opening of the heart in order to an acceptable response (Acts 16:14).
- ✚ **DIVINE PLACEMENT.** God put us into Christ (1 Cor 1:30), and set us in the body (1 Cor 12:18).
- ✚ **DIVINE FELLOWSHIP.** We were called into the fellowship of God’s Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor 1:30).

fulness of God dwelt in the person of Christ. However, the fulness of Christ does **not** dwell in a single person.

We are categorically told that Christ’s body is *“the fulness of Him that filleth all in all”* (Eph 1:23). That is, **He shares His nature and His truth with individuals THROUGH His body.** This is revealed in several texts of Scripture.

- ✚ **Jesus the Head ministers through the “joints and bands” of His body:** *“ . . . the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God”* (Col 2:19).

- ✚ **From Christ, the whole body is joined together by what every joint supplies.** *“ . . . even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth,*

“The called” are not simply the ones who **are “called,”** for *“many are called, but few are chosen”* (Matt 22:14). We became **“partakers of the heavenly calling”** **when we are placed in Christ’s body** (Heb 3:1). This was a Divine placement. We did not walk into the body of Christ, but were baptized by the Spirit into it. It was not our initiative that accomplished this, although we were surely willing in the day of His power (Psa 110:3).

We were called by God into this body – drawn by Him to Jesus, then placed in Him by grace! We became *“the called”* commensurate with our placement in Christ’s body. It was at that point that we became a functional part of the kingdom of God, able to minister to other members of the body.

The richness of these various views is often the subject of Apostolic

BE YE THANKFUL

^{15c} . . . and be ye thankful.”

Because, while we are in this world, we occupy a hostile realm, being thankful is not taken for granted. The exhortation that follows does not suggest the Colossians lacked the required attitude. **Rather, an exhortation is designed to bring forth from the individual the graces that are brought to us in salvation.** This word is spoken to the “new man.”

BE YE

“ . . . and be ye . . . ” Other versions read, “be thankful,” ^{NKJV} “give praise to God at all times,” ^{BBE} and “always be thankful.” ^{NLT} The latter two versions, in my judgment, completely miss the point of the text, as I will show.

The word “be” comes from an interesting Greek word: γίνομαι (gen-esthe). It means “become, come into being, become something.” ^{BARCLAY-NEWMAN} “To become, i.e. to come into existence, receive being; absolutely.” ^{THAYER} This is a technical point, yet is fully supported by Apostolic doctrine, which is the ultimate affirmation, preferred over any etymological view.

The point here is NOT something that we DO – although doing will result from what is here admonished. Here the Spirit addresses something we are to BE! The addition of the word “ye” is intended to connote that meaning, as though the text said, “see to it that this is what you are” – “BE YE.” Ponder some of the uses of this expression – things that we are to “BE.” It will assist you in seeing the significance of it.

- ✦ “BE YE transformed” (Rom 12:2).
- ✦ “BE ye followers of me” (1 Cor 4:16).
- ✦ “In malice BE YE children” (1 Cor 14:20).
- ✦ “BE YE steadfast, unmoveable” (1 Cor 15:58).
- ✦ “BE YE reconciled to God” (2 Cor 5:20).

- ✦ “BE YE separate” (2 Cor 6:17).
- ✦ “BE YE kind” (Eph 4:32).
- ✦ “BE YE doers” (James 1:22).
- ✦ “BE YE also patient” (James 5:8).”
- ✦ “BE YE holy” (1 Pet 1:15).
- ✦ “BE YE of one mind” (1 Pet 3:8).
- ✦ “BE ye therefore sober” (1 Pet 4:7).

An Aspect of Character

These speak more of character than of deeds – and character is the mother of what people do. What follows, therefore, is a to become an aspect of our person. **He is not exhorting us to do this or that, but to become the kind of person that salvation is intended to make us.**

is also enjoined upon the people of God (Eph 5:20; Col 3:17; Heb 13:15). The “thankful” person is discerning and grateful. What has been given to such an one is perceived, and the heart responds with this character-trait: “thankful.” Synonyms for “thankful” include appreciative, grateful, gratitude, mindful of, and agreeable to – all of which apply to the **attitude** of the individual – the manner in which they think. **Only a “thankful” person can offer acceptable “thanksgiving.”**

You may recall that the Gentile world was severely judged by God because it was not “thankful” (Rom 1:20). The Lord is not, and cannot be, kindly disposed to those who are **not “thankful.”**

For What Are We to be Thankful?

There is a particular focus in this expression. We are to grow up into Christ

The point here is NOT something that we DO – although doing will result from what is here admonished. Here the Spirit addresses something we are to BE!

Although we have been made a “new creation” in Christ Jesus (2 Cor 5:17), we come in as “newborn babes,” not as fully developed or mature persons. **Unlike the natural realm, spiritual development does not occur without thoughtful involvement.** A baby in the flesh can initially grow without any willful participation. Thought is not connected with its growth, nor is any specific endeavor. But it is not so with the “sons of God.” **They play a significant role in what they become.** That role involves taking hold of what God has provided, but they themselves are the ones who must take hold.

THANKFUL

“ . . . thankful.”

“BEING thankful” is **NOT** the same as “giving thanks” – something that

in all things (Eph 4:15), thereby becoming “thankful” persons. Here, however, the stimulus to being thankful is the knowledge that we have been “called in one body.” **We have, by the grace of God, become participants in the body of Christ, into which Christ’s “fulness” is being poured.**

While there is a glorious sense in which we are “saved” as individuals, the thrust of the Spirit’s use of this word (“saved”) pertains to the BODY, not the individual. In fact, when speaking of a person being “saved,” the emphasis is often placed on the future: “**he that endureth to the end shall be saved**” (Mat 10:22; 24:13; Mk 13:13; 16:16; John 10:9; Acts 2:21; 1 Cor 3:15). There is not perfect consistency in this use. There is, however, a certain perspective that must be seen in all of this.

“Saved” is most frequently used in relation to the whole of the body, as compared with the individual members of it (Rom 5:9,10; 8:24; 1 Cor 1:18; 15:2; Eph 2:5,8; 2 Tim 1:9; Tit 3:5). Of course, the whole body cannot be saved without the individual members being saved – as individuals. However, the point of this text is that **we have been “called” into a family through which Christ presently ministers.** It is the nature of God to set *“the solitary in families”* (Psa 68:6), making them a part of a household that ministers to one another as the Head ministers to them.

How Is This Thankfulness Shown?

The words that follow confirm how our thankfulness is to be expressed. In

this case, it is not in giving praise to God, or thanking Him for the many benefits that He daily loads upon us (Psa 68:19). That manner of giving of thanks to God is addressed elsewhere (Rom 14:6; 2 Cor 9:11; Eph 5:4,20; Phil 4:6; Col 1:12; 2:7; 4:2; 1 Thess 5:18; 1 Tim 2:1; Heb 13:15). There is no question about the necessity of such expressions.

Our text, however, approaches being thankful from another perspective. **Our gratefulness for being called and placed into the body of Christ is to evidence itself in a proper attitude toward that body.** We are to be appreciative that we have been added to the church, being made members of one another. Those who do not have a high

regard for the people of God betray that they are not grateful for being placed in the body of Christ. Even though Jesus gives His full attention to His body, yet there are those who imagine they are part of that body, yet have no regard for it. Such things cannot be.

We will now see that our lives are to be so shaped as to bring advantages to the other members of the body of Christ. No member is excluded because of their age, gender, or social status. We will see that this is involved in *“holding fast to the Head”*^{NASB} (2:19) – something that is essential for every member of the body of Christ. There is no saved person that is not part of Christ’s body.

THE INDWELLING WORD OF CHRIST

^{16a} *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom . . .”*

This is the second exhortation that begins “Let.” Once again, this reflects the manner of the Kingdom. **It is, in fact, an**

the “new man” considers these realities, he is drawn toward them, having a preference for them. These are the substance upon which the “new man” feeds. They are in the realm – the “heavenly places” – that is the native

Christ (John 5:39), and the Gospel in particular, which expounds Christ (Rom 1:16). While it is true that God has spoken to us in these last days through His Son (Heb 1:1-2), that we are personally taught by Christ (Eph 4:20), and that Christ has come to give us an understanding (1 John 5:20), that is not the stress of this text. That aspect of Christ’s indispensable ministry is unfolded in the next clause – *“dwell in you richly.”*

In a sense, the Holy Spirit is directing our attention to something in order that we might focus upon it, for it is in the focus that the required transformation takes place.

Here the Word that testifies about Christ is intended – the *“doctrine of Christ,”* as used in Second John 1:9. This speaks of a comprehension of the nature of the Scriptures, particularly the Gospel. I will go so far as to say the Word cannot dwell in you richly when it is viewed as mere law and Divine directives. **In order to be profitable, Scripture must be seen as the introduction to, and exposition of, the Person of Jesus Christ – the Messiah.**

aspect of putting on the new man. When we extend our efforts to fulfill this admonition, the grace of God will see to it that our efforts are not in vain. The “letting” is accomplished in the heart, where willingness and preference are resident. In a sense, the Holy Spirit is directing our attention to something in order that we might focus upon it, **for it is in the focus that the required transformation takes place.**

habitat of the *“new creation.”*
When we “put off the old man” and “put on the new man,” we become able to “let” these things take place within us.

THE WORD OF CHRIST

“Let the word of Christ . . .” This is the only place in Scripture where this phrase is used. This is a critical expression, and must be understood.

“The word of Christ” is the word concerning Christ – the Scriptures in general, which speak of

✚ Jesus clearly affirmed that the Scriptures testified, or primarily spoke about, Him. *“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me.”* (John 5:39).

✚ The inner eyes of the two on the road

to Emmaus were opened when Jesus “expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke 24:47). During that illuminating dialog Jesus said, “These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me” (Luke 24:44).

✚ Peter declared that the essential message of the Prophets related to the Person and accomplishments of the Lord Jesus Christ. “Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow” (1 Pet 1:10-11).

✚ Paul affirmed that Christ Jesus was the fulfillment of Moses and the Prophets. “Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: **That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles**” (Acts 26:22-23).

✚ When John confronted an impressive angel who was bringing him a message from Jesus, he was so overcome he fell at his feet to worship him. The angel immediately forbade the action, drawing his attention to Christ Himself. “And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev 19:10).

This is “the word of Christ” referred to in our text. It is the word found throughout the Scripture, but particularly in the Gospel, which declares

Christ with greater clarity, shining light upon all of the previous Scriptures.

The exhortation that follows can be said of no other “word” – particularly since the Savior was sent into the world! It cannot be said of the commandments of God, which are certainly not to be neglected. It cannot be said of instruction concerning domestic affairs, which is most essential. Nor indeed, can it be said of various instructions concerning the

with it. The Psalmist spoke of such an ingestion in these words: “Thy Word have I hid in mine heart” (Psa 119:11). Again, he wrote of the blessed man, “But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in His law doth he meditate day and night” (Psa 1:2).

This activity was commanded under the Law, but the people could not satisfactorily fulfill it: “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be

However, and be sure of this, until the Lord Jesus is clearly seen in Scripture, God will not allow anything else to be seen with any degree of clarity. Christ has been given “preeminence” “in all things,” even in the Word of God itself.

organization and responsibilities of the church, which are also indispensable.

The matter that is now urged upon us will shed light upon the subjects just mentioned. It will bring the power and the will to fulfill them to the glory of God. **However, and be sure of this, until the Lord Jesus is clearly seen in Scripture, God will not allow anything else to be seen with any degree of clarity.** Christ has been given “preeminence” “in all things,” even in the Word of God itself. He alone is the priority of Scripture, its focus and its life.

DWELL IN YOU RICHLY

“ . . . dwell in you richly . . . ”

Some other versions read, “be with you in all wealth,”^{BBE} “dwell in you abundantly,”^{DOUAY} “dwell in you plenteously,”^{GENEVA} and “in all their richness, live in your hearts.”^{NLT}

Dwell

Lexically, the word “dwell” means “to dwell in one and influence him for good,”^{THAYER} “dwell in, live in, indwell,”^{FIEBERG} and “to inhabit.”^{LIDDELL-SCOTT} In order to “the word of Christ” to bring profit, it must be internalized, or become a part of us. We must, in the words of the Revelation, “eat” the book (Rev 10:9). It must become such a part of our being that our thoughts are saturated

in thine heart” (Deut 6:6). The Law therefore commanded that the people focus outwardly upon the Law, giving their attention to it: “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates” (Deut 7:6-9). Alas, the people failed miserably in this matter, for the covenant under which the lived provided neither the grace nor the power to do this.

Richly

Lexically, “richly” means “copiously, abundantly,”^{STRONG’S} “in an abundant way,”^{FRIEBERG} “abundantly, richly,”^{THAYER} “in full measure,”^{UBS} “in large amount with the implication of it being valuable,”^{LOUW-NIDA}

When “the word of Christ” dwells in us “richly,” our minds and hearts and wills are occupied with considerations of the Lord Jesus – considerations that have been spawned by our contemplation of Scripture. Allow me to give you an example of that word

dwelling richly in a person. It is found in Paul's accounting of what motivated his sacrificial life. *"But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being*

found in abundance in those who remain unaware of it. Second, Jesus is not the concentration or focus of modern Christendom. He has been upstaged by everything from the Holy Spirit and the church itself, to organizationalism, and an emphasis on domestic responsibilities.

The professed church has not done well in fulfilling its ministry of being *"the pillar and ground of the truth"* (1 Tim 3:15). Its constituents are too ignorant of the Word of God, and are too little acquainted with the Lord of glory. They do not speak with one another about the glorious realities to which they have been called, and are too occupied with trivia. Novices are given prominent roles in her

point is that when we ponder and meditate upon *"the word of Christ,"* we will become the wiser for it. This is because as that word dwells within us, it will be unfolded to us in all of its implications. From one point of view, this is Jesus giving us an understanding (1 John 5:20). From another view, it is God teaching us (John 6:45). From yet another vantage, it is the Holy Spirit teaching us all things (1 John 2:20,27).

"Wisdom" has primarily to do with knowing how to use the word, or handle it aright (2 Tim 2:15). It is knowing how to employ the Word in the execution of the will of God. This is a wisdom that comes down from above, and it is *"first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy"* (James 3:17). There is no valid aspect of life that it does not address – no area of responsibility in which it will leave us deficient.

Spiritual knowhow does not come by means of worldly wisdom. **No saint becomes more expert in living unto God by acquiring the wisdom of men.** The wisdom that is required to live acceptably, handle the Word of God aright, and be profitable in the Kingdom, is directly related to one's consideration of *"the word of Christ."* **When people allow their minds to be given to other considerations or priorities, they begin to become spiritually poor and foolish.** It is only as the new man is put on, and the word of Christ dwells in us richly, that we are able to proceed in living in a God-pleasing manner.

A SIMILAR PASSAGE IN EPHESIANS

A similar passage is found in the book of Ephesians. It provides an additional perspective of this exhortation. *"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord"* (Eph 5:19). Although I will focus on the eighteenth verse, I have also shown the nineteenth verse, confirming that the passage relates to the same things considered in our Colossian text.

What Colossians refers to as

Men have been brought to believe that the most critical part of an assembly is what they offer to God, and seem oblivious of the fact that the Word of Christ concerns what God is offering to them.

conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead"^{NASB} (Phil 3:7-11). All of that was prompted by Paul's consideration of the Scriptures in general, and the Gospel in particular. *"The word of Christ"* was dwelling in him richly.

Job also reflected the attitude that can more precisely be fulfilled by those who are in Christ Jesus. *"Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food"* (Job 23:12). Jeremiah did the same. *"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts"* (Jer15:16).

Our Religious Culture

The religious culture of our world, particularly the Western world, is stricken with poverty in this area. First, within the professed church there is an abysmal ignorance of *"the word of Christ."* As a consequence, it cannot dwell *"richly"* in the people – for a message cannot be

assemblies, and too little time is being given to the reading and exposition of the Word of God. **Men have been brought to believe that the most critical part of an assembly is what they offer to God, and seem oblivious of the fact that the Word of Christ concerns what God is offering to them.**

It is not possible for *"the word of Christ"* to dwell *"richly"* in those who are comfortable in such a miserable environment. However, if ever a person is going to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, he must get around to letting the word of Christ dwell in him richly. If this does not take place, everything else becomes futile. I understand that this seems very strong. However, it is not nearly strong enough.

IN ALL WISDOM

" . . . in all wisdom . . . " Other versions read, *"with all wisdom,"*^{NASB} *"in all wealth of wisdom,"*^{BBE} and *"and make you wise."*^{NLT}

"All wisdom" involves every kind of wisdom, or a fulness of wisdom. The

letting the word of Christ dwell in us richly, is called being “filled with the Spirit” in Ephesians. Most versions read exactly this way: “be filled with the Spirit.” Some other readings are, “be full of the Spirit,”^{BBE} “be fulfilled with the Spirit,”^{GENEVA} and “let the Holy Spirit fill and control you”^{NLT}

As used in this text, being “filled with the Spirit” is not an event, as in Luke 1:41 and 67, Acts 2:4, 4:31, and 9:17. It is more of a condition, or continual state of being, as in Luke 1:15, 4:1 and 8, Acts 6:3 and 5, 7:55, 11:24, and 13:9 and 52. The text does not say “get filled,” but “be filled.” The former speaks of an occurrence. The latter is a state, status, or continual condition. This is not something that comes on you, but what dwells within you – and there is a vast difference. **It speaks of consistency and continuance, which are aspects of life.** This is not intended to deny the reality of epochal experiences. Rather, it is

to say that is not the focus of this text.

Because the Holy Spirit uses the Word, being filled with the Spirit is paralleled with the Word of Christ dwelling in us richly. The Word of God, for example, is called “the sword of the Spirit” (Eph 6:17). Paul referred to his powerful preaching of the Gospel as “speech and preaching” that was “in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (1 Cor 2:4). It is after the Ephesians heard the “word of the truth of the Gospel,” that they were “sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” (Eph 1:13). The communication of the truth is associated with the “words” of Scripture – “not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words” (1 Cor 2:13).

There is an undeniable correlation between the effectual working of the Spirit and the Word of God – or, as our text states it, “the word of Christ.” **It is**

unlikely, if not impossible, for a person in whom the word of Christ is not dwelling richly, to be full of the Spirit of God. It is possible that the two experiences are not synonymous, but they are mutually dependent, one upon the other. When, for example, Peter was filled with the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, he provided a powerful exposition of the Word of God (Acts 2:14-36). That word had been dwelling in Him, occupying his mind and heart. The Holy Spirit then took that indwelling word, and enabled Peter to speak it wisely and productively.

Although the circumstances of our text are not identical to those of the second chapter of Acts, the principle is the same. **The Spirit will enable those in whom the word of Christ is dwelling richly to speak profitably to their brethren.** This will be done “in all wisdom,” yielding benefits that glorify God. Profitability is thus linked with “the word of Christ.”

TEACHING AND ADMONISHING ONE ANOTHER

“ 16b. . . . **teaching and admonishing one another . . .**”

The Spirit directs our attention to a result of the word of Christ dwelling in us richly in all wisdom. It has to do with the life of the body of Christ – the associations that we have with one another particularly in the assembly. **This is a spiritual definition of wisdom.** You will find that it represents a manner of thinking that is exceedingly rare among professed believers. The “one another” aspect of spiritual life can hardly be found in an institutional setting. Rarely are joint activities directed to one

another, as this text exhorts. In fact, the modern church seems to be promoting more of a religion for spectators.

It is the solemn responsibility of every believer to adapt to the nature of the Kingdom. One aspect of that kingdom is now placed before us.

TEACHING

“ . . . **teaching . . . one another . . .**” Every version uses the same word: “teaching” or “teach.” Lexically, the word “teaching” means “to hold discourse with others in order to instruct them . . . impart instruction, instill doctrine into one, explain or expound a thing,”^{STRONG’S}

“to hold discourse with others in order to instruct them, deliver didactic discourses,”^{THAYER} “teach, instruct,”^{FRIEBERG} “act of teaching, instruction,”^{UBS} and “to provide instruction in a formal or informal setting.”^{LOUW-NIDA}

This is teaching that yields edification, not merely the dissemination of lifeless in formation. Edification is everywhere declared to be the objective of the gathering together of believers.

✚ “Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may **edify another**” (Rom 14:19).

✚ “Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to **edification**” (Rom 15:2).

✚ “Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the **edifying** of the church” (1 Cor 14:12).

✚ “How is it then, brethren? when ye

The “one another” aspect of spiritual life can hardly be found in an institutional setting. Rarely are joint activities directed to one another, as this text exhorts. In fact, the modern church seems to be promoting more of a religion for spectators.

come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto **edifying**" (1 Cor 14:26).

- ✦ "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the **edifying** of the body of Christ" (Eph 4:11-12).
- ✦ "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the **edifying** of itself in love" (Eph 4:16).
- ✦ "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of **edifying**, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Eph 4:29).
- ✦ "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and **edify** one another, even as also ye do" (1 Thess 5:11).
- ✦ "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly **edifying** which is in faith: so do" (1 Tim 1:4).

When believers come together, it is to be "for the better," not "for the worse" (1 Cor 11:17). They do not come together to be entertained, or to "have fun," as some are wont to put it. Rather, their gatherings are for the purpose of making some progress in the kingdom, and increasing their grasp of the Word of God, by which they live (Lk 4:4). **The things of God are to become clearer to us because we have met together.**

"Teaching" yields sound spiritual perspectives, and a desire to please the

"Teaching" yields sound spiritual perspectives, and a desire to please the Lord. It promotes the anticipation of the coming of the Lord, and firms up the resolve to keep oneself "unspotted from the world"

Lord. It promotes the anticipation of the coming of the Lord, and firms up the resolve to keep oneself "unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

Too often, "teaching" is viewed as cold doctrine, addressed only to the intellect. However, this is a complete misrepresentation of the case. "Teaching" is addressed primarily to the heart, which in turn governs the mind. I have often heard people say, "we do not teach doctrine, but just teach Jesus." Such statements are pure nonsense, and are themselves a teaching – a false teaching. The word "doctrine" means "teaching." That is what doctrine is. When Jesus taught, the people were astonished at His "doctrine" (Mk 1:22). His teaching was, in fact, called "His doctrine" (Mk 4:2). Several times it is said of Jesus, "He taught them" (Matt 5:2; 7:29; 13:54; Mk 1:22; 2:13; 4:2; 10:1; Lk 4:31; John 8:2).

The wisdom that results from the word of Christ dwelling in us richly is to express itself in teaching "one another." That is, instructing one another in the manner of the Kingdom, and assisting one another to be more conversant with the things of God. Therefore faith and hope are promoted through the indispensable ministry of edification.

ADMONISHING

"... and admonishing one another . . ." Other versions read "helping one another,"^{BBE} "and advise each other,"^{NJB} and "counsel each other."^{NLT}

Lexically, the word "admonishing" means, "warn, exhort,"^{STRONG'S} "admonish, warn, instruct, as giving instructions in regard to belief and

behavior,"^{FRIBERG} and "to put in mind,"^{THAYER}

Admonition moves people to do something with the truth, whether correcting their manners, or pressing more aggressively toward the goal. It relates to exhortation, by which brethren are constrained to be transformed by the renewing of their mind. The Lord does not leave us to simply consider the facts. He urges us to act upon the truth, not allowing it to remain amidst the thorns and thistles of worldly distractions.

Mature believers were told, "And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, **able also to admonish one another**" (Rom 15:14). That is, able to stir one another up, provoking to love and good works. The record of Israel, we are told, has been "written for our admonition," to move us to spiritual activity (1 Cor 10:11). Those who are appointed "over" the brethren are described as those who "labor" among the brethren and "admonish" them (1 Thess 5:2).

Here is an activity that is to be found within the body of Christ – "admonishing." **Our gatherings are to be noted for their compelling nature.** They are to be so given to the truth of God that those who gather together are moved to look to Jesus, press toward the mark, and work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. **If these things are not the result of meeting together, the meeting has served no acceptable purpose.** This text is to be taken seriously.

PSALMS AND HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS

"^{16c}. . . in psalms and hymns | and spiritual songs . . ."

The Spirit now provides a

Our lives in this world are not divorced from our life in Christ. Here are areas in which peace and joy can be cultured— by Given O. Blakely

context in which teaching and admonition can take place. I will tell you that what He says will not at all comport with the general ideas on this subject. However, this is the truth according to the Spirit, and we do well to take it in. It will expose some of the religious falseness that is becoming quite popular in our day.

Those with a penchant for music and praise will have a particular interest

the matter or not, the Holy Scriptures do make this association.

- ✦ *“Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery”* (Psa 81:2).
- ✦ *“Sing unto the LORD with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm”* (Psa 98:5).
- ✦ *“Praise the LORD with harp: sing*

itself, nor were they a part of the ceremonial law.

David once spoke of elaborating on an otherwise “dark saying,” by playing on the harp. *“I will incline mine ear to a parable: I will open my dark saying upon the harp”* (Psa 49:4). Another version reads, *“with the harp I will expound my riddle.”*^{NIV} He also spoke of praising God *“upon the harp”* (Psa 43:4), and singing praise *“upon the harp unto God”* (Psa 147:7). Additionally, he said he would *“show forth”* God’s loving kindness *“Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound”* (Psa 92:2-3).

A “psalm” emphasizes the manner in which the music is presented – with a musical instrument. It can be as an accompaniment to the voice, or as a cunningly played instrumental song. In either case, the truth is clarified by the presentation, bringing edification to the listeners. Strictly speaking, a “psalm” is a song set to music.

Throughout history, the Psalms themselves have been sung among God’s people. This is because they contain a wide range of spiritual expressions that precisely represent the thinking and experiences of the godly. **You will be hard pressed to find a single valid spiritual experience, whether pleasant or sorrowful, that is not expressed in the Psalms.** What a rich heritage of song is found in them.

HYMNS

“... and hymns...” One version reads, *“holy words.”*^{BBE}

Lexically, the word “hymns” means, “a sacred song, song of praise to God, especially used to express thanksgiving,”^{FRIBERG} “a sacred song, hymn,”^{THAYER} “a song with religious content,”^{LOUW-NIDQ} and “a festive song or ode, also of mournful songs.”^{LIDDELL-SCOTT}

A “hymn” is generally understood to be a song of praise – particularly one of thanksgiving. **It is interesting that on the night of our Lord’s betrayal, when His soul was “sorrowful, even unto death” (Matt 26:38), Jesus and the disciples sang “a hymn”** (Matt 26:30; Mk 14:26) – a song of praise and thanksgiving.

You will be hard pressed to find a single valid spiritual experience, whether pleasant or sorrowful, that is not expressed in the Psalms. What a rich heritage of song is found in them.

in this word. It will assist them in using music and singing properly, and free them from the juvenile notions of those unacquainted with the manner of the heavenly kingdom. Three different musical expressions are used, confirming the great variety that characterizes life in Christ Jesus.

I want to emphasize that these provide the context in which teaching and admonition take place. More precisely, they are vehicles through which the brethren can be instructed and motivated.

PSALMS

“... in psalms...” One version read, *“songs of praise.”*^{BBE}

Lexically speaking, the word “psalms” means “a striking, twanging, of a striking the chords of a musical instrument, of a pious song, a psalm,”^{THAYER} and “Old Testament psalm, as used among believers song of praise, sacred song.”^{FRIBERG}

Although the Christian community is divided over the meaning of the word “psalms,” there is not so much as a syllable of contention over the word in Scripture. All such contention is by man, for man, and to man. Those without religious bias or prejudice agree the word associates singing with instrumental music. But whether we take their word for

unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings” (Psa 33:2).

- ✦ *“I will also praise thee with the psaltery, even thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel”* (Psa 71:22).
- ✦ *“Sing unto the LORD with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm”* (Psa 98:5).
- ✦ *“Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God”* (Psa 147:7).
- ✦ *“Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp”* (Psa 149:3).

Those objecting to the use of musical instruments affirm these texts are from the Old Covenant, and are therefore not applicable to us. However, this is not the case, for the Psalms are not integral to the Old Covenant. The words that God wrote on two tables of stone were called *“the words of the covenant”* (Ex 34:28). There is no reference to musical instruments in those words. Further, singing and praise were not matters integral to the Old Covenant

A hymn is a song of insight and understanding, for praise must be driven by perception, else it is not valid. Proper singing cannot be done mechanically, even though much of the *Christian* singing of our day appears to be robotic to the extreme.

SPIRITUAL SONGS

“ . . . and spiritual songs . . . ”

Other versions read, “*spiritual canticles*,”
DOUAY

Lexically, a “*spiritual song*” is a song or ode belonging to the spirit. That is, it is the expression of one who is filled with the Spirit, belonging to the higher part of the human nature – the “*new man*.” It is an inspired song that has resulted from a spiritual person being moved by the Holy Spirit. It is generally understood to be in a poetic form.

“*Spiritual songs*” are wide in their scope, containing not only praise and thanksgiving, but exhortations and admonitions as well. In order to emphasize the elimination of vanity and worldliness in our songs, the Spirit refers to “*spiritual songs*.” These are songs that reflect “*the mind of the Spirit*” (Rom 8:27), and speak to the “*new man*,” motivating, encouraging, and admonishing. These “*songs*” can also testify to the various aspects of spiritual

Let the singing of the saints of God expound and clarify the truth! Let admonitions, warnings, and powerful testimonies of valid spiritual life be expressed in them. Let God be praised in such a manner as will edify the hearers.

life that are common to all believers. They can integrate human experience with the firm statements of the Word of God.

SOMETHING TO NOTE

The modern merchants of Christian song have capitalized on the word “*praise*.” However, it does not sound right in their mouth. They, like the Ephraimites of old, cannot “*frame to pronounce it right*” (Judges 12:6). They do not “*teach and admonish*” with their songs, and make no pretension to do so. **Let the singing of the saints of God expound and clarify the truth!** Let admonitions, warnings, and powerful testimonies of valid spiritual life be expressed in them. Let God be praised in such a manner as will edify the hearers.

DECLARING WAR

God’s people need to declare war

on matters of the assembly that do not teach and admonish. **There is no place in the gathering of the righteous for things that do not make for edification.** Nor, indeed, is there a place for the introduction of worldly fads and fashions. The music of our day is in a state of degeneracy, where more attention is given to sound than to the godly effects of the music. Our text has spoken plainly, and it is the business of every assembly to see to it that they fulfill it.

Let us have done with needless repetition. **If we are going to repeat a phrase, let it be preceded by some affirmation that clarifies the repetition – like the 136th Psalm.** Some of us have grown exceedingly weary of carnal emotional hype supplanting godly teaching and admonition. Our text states the case with great clarity.

SINGING WITH GRACE

“^{16d} . . . *singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*”

In order for teaching and admonition to take place in our music, the people themselves must be correctly motivated. It will do no good for a Cain or Balaam to sing to us. A proper frame of mind is to accompany our singing. That is what is here expounded.

SINGING WITH GRACE IN YOUR HEARTS

“ . . . *singing with grace in your hearts* . . . ” Other versions read, “*singing with thankfulness in your hearts*,”^{NASB} “*with gratitude in your hearts*,”^{NIV} “*with thankful hearts*,”^{NLT} and “*in grace singing*

in your hearts to the Lord.”^{YLT}



The latter translation is technically more accurate. That is, the verse is admonishing us to sing in our hearts while we are standing in the grace

of God. There are actually two clauses in the Greek text – “*in the grace*,” and “*singing in your hearts*.” The singing is what is in the heart, which means it is to be done heartily, from the heart, with a perfect coordination between the heart and the mouth. There is to be no hypocrisy in our hearts!

The fact that singing is “*in the heart*” does not mean it does not come out of our mouths. We know this is the case, because we are teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. These songs are to reflect what is in our hearts, not mere fleshly feelings or preferences. It is to be done while we ourselves are “*in grace*,” with

great appreciation for what it brings.

Effective singing – singing that teaches and admonishes – can only come from hearts that have been favorably impacted by the grace of God. In this sense, the text means that the grace of God is to be the cognitive environment in which our songs are sung. That is, we are to have a lively awareness of God’s grace – an awareness that is birthed by the belief and contemplation of the Gospel of Christ.

There is a very wonderful

in light” (Col 1:12). When we shake off the doldrums of the flesh, and sing with the perspective of the new man, such teaching and admonition will take place as cannot be realized in any other environment. Then, the singing is not an end of itself, but is the expression of a heart that has been *“established with grace”* (Heb 13:9).

In such singing, there is a sense of God’s favor upon us. The singing is more than an attempt to express of our love for Him. Our love has erupted from the perception of His love, for *“we love Him because He first loved us”* (1 John 4:10).

which we have been raised. We cannot sing profitably when we stand in the quicksand of law. But when we can see the smile of God, and are convinced of His gracious acceptance, our hearts drive acceptable and profitable words from our mouths. That is the kind of expression that teaches and admonishes our brothers and sisters.

TO THE LORD

“ . . . to the Lord.” Strictly speaking, our singing is to God. Generally speaking, it is a form of teaching and admonishing one another. The meaning here is not so much that we are singing the words exclusively for God, but that we are saying them in His presence, and with a sense of His approval. They are addressed to Him, but are for others as well. Holy angels are privy to them, as well as the family of God.

The very same words that teach and admonish the brethren are sung *“to the Lord.”* The Psalms are filled with such expressions – uttered to God, but profitable to the saints. **Who has not subjected themselves to the songs of the sweet psalmist of Israel without being taught and admonished?** Our assemblies can likewise be places of great spiritual benefit. Let us see to it that we contribute to such a wholesome environment by letting the word of Christ dwell in us richly.

Effective singing – singing that teaches and admonishes – can only come from hearts that have been favorably impacted by the grace of God.

perspective declared in this verse that I find few have actually perceived. **We are being exhorted to sing with the knowledge that the smile and approval of God is upon us in Christ Jesus.** There is to be an awareness that we are *“accepted in the Beloved”* (Eph 1:6), and have been *“made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints*

The expression of our love for Him has been driven by a comprehension of His love for us, and thus our singing takes the form of gratefulness.

The grace of God is not simply a kind of mantel that covers the uncomeliness of men. It is the refreshing air of the heavenly places into

THE FOCUS OF WORDS AND DEEDS

“17a And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus . . .”

This is a transitional verse, moving us from considerations pertaining to the assembly, to personal ones. These may appear to be two different subjects, but in a sense they are two parts of a single subject. **The Spirit is going to affirm that there is no part of life that may be conducted independently of faith in, and commitment to, the Lord.** No provision has been made for us to step out of the role of *“the sons of God”* in order to live unto ourselves. This verse will reach

backward, covering everything that has already been said. It will also reach forward to everything that will be said. That is the significance of the word *“and.”* It is like a spiritual coupling that joins two lines of thought.

WHATSOEVER YE DO

“And whatsoever ye do . . .” Other versions read, *“And whatever you do,”* ^{NKJV} *“And everything, whatever you may do.”* ^{DARBY}

The word *“whatsoever,”* or *“whatever,”* means *“every kind of; all, full, absolute, entire, whole,”* ^{STRONG’S} *“Any and every, of every kind, and all manner,”* ^{THAYER} *“every kind of, all*

sorts of,” ^{FRIBERG} *“everything, always, and continually,”* ^{UBS} *“the totality of any subject,”* ^{LOUW-NIDA} and *“all, or the whole.”* ^{LIDDELL-SCOTT}

In other words, in Christ all of life is dominated by a single objective. Life is not divided into the secular and the spiritual – with one part being lived for self, and the other for God. It is ever true, *“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again”* (2 Cor 5:14-15). In Christ divisions come to an end.

From the standpoint of personalities, *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus”* (Gal 3:28). From the standpoint of expression, it is *“whatsoever ye do.”*

This is fundamental to *“newness of life.”* **Salvation is broad enough to cover whatever you do. The umbrella of grace is spread over the entirety of life.** While this seems very apparent to me now, I recall with great joy when the truth of it began to dawn upon my spirit many years ago. It was revolutionary then, and remains so.

WORD OR DEED

“... in word or deed...”

This includes all modes of human expression toward others – what is spoken and what is done. It includes all means of communication between personalities. Everything that we utter is to be brought under one grand purpose. Every form of doing, work, or labor is gathered under a single objective. All forms of speech, every message, teaching, doctrine, or verbal communication is governed by one rule. Each and every business, employment, enterprise, undertaking, or accomplishment is to be brought under the following standard.

DO ALL IN THE NAME

“... do all in the name of the Lord Jesus...” Other versions read, *“do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus,”* ^{NIV} *“do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,”* ^{NRSV} *“let it be in the name of the Lord Jesus,”* ^{NJB} and *“let it be as a representative of the Lord Jesus.”* ^{NLT}

The world has very few, if any, approaches to life that are after this manner. Even in occupations that are most demanding, like that of a soldier, time is given for a furlough, when some relief is granted from that particular line of work. When an individual is found who does not take advantage of such periods, he is generally viewed as an eccentric person – unconventional and slightly strange. In the flesh, men seek to promote a well-rounded life, in which the monotony of a single objective is avoided.

However, this is not the manner of

life in Christ Jesus. **In redemption, the whole man is recovered. In salvation, deliverance is complete, touching every area. In justification, the whole scope of life is taken into consideration.** Sanctification, or separation unto God, is not for one part of our lives, but for the whole of them. **Whether it is domestic or social life, private or public, here is something that is always to be done.**

DO IT IN THE NAME!

Looking at this from the standpoint of our intentions, *“do all in the*

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name of the Lord Jesus” – for His glory, and to please Him. From the standpoint of the result of the doing, it is *“That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you”* (2 Thess 1:12). **No word or deed must be allowed to detract from Christ.** We cannot leave Jesus in order to speak more freely, or do things that do not require His presence and blessing. Because Christ is *“over all, God blessed for ever”* (Rom 9:5), everything that we say or do must have His interests in mind.

Some have viewed the phrase *“in His name”* from Mount Sinai, as though the text meant, “Do it because Jesus said to do it” Or, “Do it by the authority of Christ” – that is, only do or say what Jesus told you to do or say. Some have thought this expression to be synonymous with, “Do everything according to the rules or guidelines that are spelled out in Scripture.” I do not understand this to be the meaning of the text.

Various forms of the phrase *“in the name of the Lord Jesus,”* are found several places in Scripture. They will

assist us in understanding its meaning.

✚ When expelling a fornicator from their midst, the Corinthians were told to do so *“in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,”* as they were gathered together with Paul’s spirit, and *“the power of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (1 Cor 5:4). This involved more than acting on the authority of Christ. It had more to do with acting in harmony with Christ’s person and character, and in fellowship with Him. In other words, their action was not to be a mere formality. **Rather,**

in their doing, they were acting as representatives of the living Christ.

✚ The cleansing, sanctification, and justification of believers is said to be *“in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God”* (1 Cor 6:11). This too was not a mere formality. It was attended with both the presence of Jesus and the working of the Holy Spirit.

✚ When commanding the Thessalonians to withdraw themselves from *“every brother that walketh disorderly,”* Paul said to do it *“in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (2 Thess 3:6). While Christ’s authority was behind this, Paul was speaking as one who was a worker together with Christ, not as a mere spokesman.

To do everything *“in the name of the Lord”* is to do so **in a state of involvement with Him. It is to consciously live and move and have our being in Him** (Acts 17:28). **It is to be aware of Him, focused upon Him,**

and conducting ourselves in harmony with His revealed purpose. This is involved in presenting our bodies a living sacrifice to God (Rom 12:2). It is walking by faith (2 Cor 5:7) and living in the Spirit (Gal 5:25). It means to take

Jesus with you in the deed, with Him dwelling in your heart by faith (Eph 3:17). "In the name" is in His Person – something that is done as a consequence of being in Him. **It has more to do with saying and doing in accordance with**

the mind of the Lord, than in response to a particular commandment from Him. When we conduct our lives in fellowship with Jesus, then, when we say and do, we are doing so in His name.

GIVING THANKS TO GOD

^{17b} . . . *giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*"

Previously, our text admonished us to be "thankful" – to have a grateful spirit or nature (3:15). Now we will be exhorted to **do something** with that spirit – to express it in words.

GIVING THANKS

" . . . *giving thanks . . .* " Other versions read, "giving praise,"^{BBE} and "while giving thanks."^{NLT}

The words "giving thanks" come

produces a certain spiritually fragrant surroundings in which words and deeds can be properly expressed.

TO GOD THE FATHER

" . . . *to God and the Father . . .* "

While this is a technical point, it is worthy of our attention. Our prayers are not to be ambiguous regarding the one to whom they are addressed. As a general rule, prayer is addressed to the Father. Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Our Father . . ." (Matt 6:9). Regarding prayer,

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," giving thanks for them (Col 1:3). The giving of thanks is most always said to be "to God" or "to the Father" (Rom 1:8; 6:17; 7:25; 14:6; 1 Cor 1:4,14; 14:18; 15:57; 2 Cor 2:14; 8:16; 9:11,12; Eph 5:20; Phil 1:3; 4:6; Col 1:3,12; 3:17; 1 Thess 1:2; 2:13; 3:9; 2 Thess 1:3; 2:13; 2 Tim 1:3; Phile 1:4).

It is not that it is wrong to give thanks to Christ Jesus, and that is not suggested in this verse. Paul once said, "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry" (1 Tim 1:12). This reflects the fellowship with Jesus into which we have been called. Jesus put Paul into the ministry, and he thanked Him for it. Our text, however, deals with the normal posture of prayer, and particularly of thanksgiving.

God the Father is the Architect of our Salvation, and Jesus Christ His Son is the One who has implemented it. Christ's purpose is to "bring us to God" (1 Pet 3:18), and we come "to the Father" by means of Him (John 14:6). He has reconciled us "to God" (Rom 5:10), and "through Him" was have access "unto the Father" (Eph 2:18).

In this text, giving thanks to God particularly regards the matter of our salvation, and acceptance in Christ Jesus. It is the Father who sent the Son to be the "Savior of the world" (1 John 4:14). It is the Father who has "sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying Abba Father" (Gal 4:6). It is the Father who has bestowed a unique "manner of love" upon us, so that we are properly called "the sons of God" (1 John 3:1). It is the Father that raised Jesus from the dead (Gal 1:1), and "gave Him glory" (1 Pet 1:21). It is the Father who has "made us meet to be partaker of the

In this text, giving thanks to God particularly regards the matter of our salvation, and acceptance in Christ Jesus.

from a single Greek word which means to **express gratefulness.** In this text, the New Living Translation gives the sense of the text. It is that we are to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus WHILE giving thanks. Make no mistake about this, the expression of thanks will impact upon what we say and do.

As is declared elsewhere, thanks is to be given "for all things" (Eph 5:20), and "in all circumstances" as well^{NIV} (1 Thess 5:18). Acceptable thanks cannot be accomplished by law alone. Thanks is to be "given" – as a "sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips" (Heb 13:15). Thanksgiving is to the life of faith like the incense was to the Holy Place, while the priests went about their activities. **It is an incense that**

He told them to "pray to thy Father" (Matt 6:6). Before He left them, Jesus told His disciples they would be entering into a new kind of time – a time when they would not make direct requests of Him as they did when He walked among them in the flesh. Following His departure, they would not address their requests to Him, while He, in turn, petitioned the Father in their stead. He was quite pointed in His words. "At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: and in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you" (John 16:23).

Earlier in Colossians, Paul said that he himself prayed "to God and the

inheritance of the saints in light" (Col 1:12). It is the Father upon whom we call (1 Pet 1:17). Jesus Christ Himself is our "Advocate with the Father" (1 John 2:1).

It is particularly with these things in mind that we give "thanks to God and the Father." While it is appropriate to give thanks to God for food, clothing, shelter, and the general provisions of life, that is not the focus of this verse. Such thanksgiving is not of sufficient power to accompany all of our words and deeds. That kind of thanksgiving must be focused on the salvation that is in Christ Jesus "with eternal glory" (2 Tim 2:10).

BY HIM

"... by Him." Other versions read "through Him." ^{NKJV/NASB/NIV}

Our thanks is to the Father through Christ in the sense of us coming to the Father by Him (John 14:6). It is

Giving thanks to God by Jesus, therefore, is in strict harmony with both the nature and glory of our salvation. Such thanksgiving is to be given in the understanding of that situation.

also in the sense of having access to God through Him (Eph 2:18). It is even through Christ that we believe in God. As it is written, "Through Him you believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and glorified Him, and so your faith and hope are in God" ^{NIV} (1 Pet 1:21). Our "spiritual sacrifices" are also made "acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 2:5). God will even raise us from the dead "by Jesus" (2 Cor 4:14).

Giving thanks to God by Jesus, therefore, is in strict

harmony with both the nature and glory of our salvation. Such thanksgiving is to be given in the understanding of that situation. Once again, this is not referring to the general giving of thanks, but to thanksgiving that is driven by a sense of the greatness of our salvation.

That is the kind of thanksgiving that can accompany all words and deeds, bringing a sanctifying influence upon them, and thus making them profitable to the members of Christ's body.

CONCLUSION

We have dealt with the nature of the walk of faith. That walk does not center in a commitment to an institutional emphasis, or the maintenance of organizational identity and commitment. Spiritual life is not

fellowship with the Father and the Son (1 John 1:3), being filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:19), or possessing a thankful heart (3:15). Those who live by the Law have no perceived need of the peace of God, and consequently see no need for it to rule

However, real spiritual life requires all of these things. There will be no growth if peace is not umpiring the affairs of our life, enabling us to keep the Lord at the center of our lives. If we have no regard for the body of Christ, treating the people of God as though they were incidental in the affairs of our pilgrimage, we are sure to stagnate, and eventually fall away. God placed us in the body of His Son, surrounding us with those in whom He is working, "both to will and to do of His own good pleasure" (Phil 2:13).

There will be no growth if peace is not umpiring the affairs of our life, enabling us to keep the Lord at the center of our lives. If we have no regard for the body of Christ, treating the people of God as though they were incidental in the affairs of our pilgrimage, we are sure to stagnate, and eventually fall away.

Therefore, when we are admonished to "let the peace of God rule in our hearts" and to "let the word of Christ dwell in us richly," we are being admonished to intentionally live in harmony with the purpose of God, into which we have been called. We are not to allow ourselves to be obstacles to the edifying of the body of Christ, but are to be contributors to their betterment.

maintained by adherence to a set of rules, or within the framework of regulations. Such an approach to life does not require

their hearts and minds. Nor, indeed, do such sense a need for the word of Christ to dwell richly within them.

These things will happen when we aggressively "put off the old man," and

"put on the new man." However, where those things are not being done, the work of the Lord for good is not being accomplished within us. That work requires your consent. Give it!

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 3/19/2004. In this session, we will be covering verses 18 of the third chapter through 4:1 of the fourth chapter. The title of our lesson is, "INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND MOTIVATION." The Spirit now associates newness of life with various relationships in this world. These are all area that can prove to be either a disadvantage or an advantage. The aim is to make them an advantage. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

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COMMENTARY on Romans: <http://wotruth.com/Romans.htm>

COMMENTARY on Daniel: <http://wotruth.com/Daniel.htm>

COMMENTARY on Colossians: <http://wotruth.com/Colossians.htm>

REFRESHING WATERS RENEWAL: <http://wotruth.com/renewal.htm>