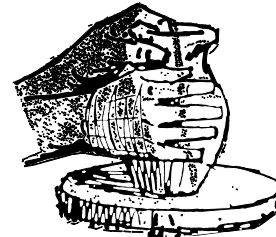


His Workmanship at Westside

*"For we are His
workmanship, created in
Christ Jesus for good works."
—Ephesians 2:10*



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Isaiah 64:8

Prison Prayer, Part 4: Giving Thanks *by David B. Curtis*

The apostle Paul prayed for his brothers in Colossae in Col 1:9-14. He expressed his and God's desire for them to grow in Christ. Paul always prayed for the spiritual needs of fellow believers—especially their spiritual maturity. He knew that blessings, spiritual and material, are connected to spiritual growth. As we grow in our relationship with God, we will be blessed, and our prayers will also focus more on spiritual matters.

Paul mentioned two major and specific requests on behalf of believers. First, He asked God that they would **"be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding,"** v. 9. Then, Paul asked God for **"a walk worthy of the Lord,"** v. 10. Paul used five participles to describe five directions a walk worthy of the Lord will take:

1. **Pleasing** the Lord fully (in all respects),
2. **Being fruitful** in every good work,
3. **Increasing** in (or by) the knowledge of God,
4. **Being strengthened** with all might, and
5. **Giving thanks** to the Father.

Over a few weeks we have seen what it means to be pleasing to the

Lord, to be fruitful, to increase in the knowledge of God, and to be strengthened by God's great and glorious power. Today, our final study of this prayer, we will discuss gratitude.

V. GIVING THANKS TO THE FATHER. Giving thanks to the Father is the crowning virtue of these five qualities. *"Giving thanks"* is the product of a life that is growing by the knowledge of God in spiritual wisdom and understanding. Thankfulness is an outstanding characteristics of a Christian. There is nothing so contradictory as an unthankful Christian. When Paul and Silas had been beaten, cast into prison, and put in the stocks in the inner prison at Philippi, they sang hymns to God. It was midnight. They were in pain. Humanly speaking, everything had gone wrong. But they showed steadfastness and patience with joy, see 2 Cor 7:4. But this wasn't just the response of apostles. The churches of Macedonia, *"in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality,"* 2 Cor 8:2; cf. Heb 10:34. The Apostle Paul was no stranger to affliction. When he said they were having a great trial of afflic-

tion, you can believe it was intense. But they still had an abundance of joy. Believers, when we are joyfully patient and longsuffering, God is honored. But this is only possible as we depend upon His power. The dependent life is a thankful life.

Learning to live by praise or thanksgiving is a key element in steadfastness and longsuffering, and in all areas of life, because it turns our focus from ourselves to Almighty God. This pattern is seen throughout the Psalms and in the entire Bible. So important is thankfulness that it is mentioned over 40 times in Paul's epistles and seven times in Colossians, see 1:2-3, 12; 2:7; 3:15, 17; 4:2. We give thanks for the awesome blessings we have through the person and work of Christ.

Thanksgiving is an expression of an inner recognition and acknowledgment of the grace of God in every area of our lives. True thankfulness proceeds from the heart through the lips. If the heart is evil—filled with greed, with preoccupation with the details of life, with problems such as unresolved feelings of anger and resentment—then thankfulness is

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"...May you be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; may you walk worthy of the Lord, pleasing Him fully, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father Who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light." —Colossians 1:9-12 (good to memorize)

basically impossible.

Reasons to be thankful. We have so many reasons to be thankful, even in the midst of adversity, but because of the world around and the attitudes of most and because of our own tendency toward self-centeredness, we are prone to be very unthankful. Being thankful requires a proper comprehension of the reasons why we should be thankful. Thankfulness cannot occur in a vacuum of ignorance. So Paul does not just tell his readers to be thankful, but points them to four awesome blessings that they possess through the mighty acts the Father has accomplished in the person and work of His Beloved Son. Paul mentioned four reasons to be thankful in this prayer: These give us a wonderful illustration of what God has done in the person of His Son and given to all believers in Christ. Through Christ, the Father has:

1. **Qualified** us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light, cf. 1 Pet 1:3-5.
 2. **Delivered** us from the power of darkness, cf. Eph 2:1-5.
 3. **Conveyed** us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.
 4. **Redeemed** us, providing the forgiveness of sins, Rev 1:5-6.
- Christians can be considered qualified to receive the inheritance of all God's people, to be brought out of former sin (delivered from its bondage) and conveyed into a new life by redemption and forgiveness from God. Each of these is paralleled in the Exodus, by God's great work in redemption from Egyptian bondage into the freedom of serving the one true God.

Why is it that we are to be thankful to God? Well, He "*has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.*" Qualified is Gk *hikanoo*, which means "to make sufficient, to qualify, to enable, to make fit"; but it does not mean "to make deserving." The blessings believers have in Christ are by the amazing grace and power of God. Only God, the Almighty Himself, is the Sufficient One who has the resources to qualify sinful man for an eternal relationship with Himself. Jamison, Fausset, and Brown comment that this was a one-time, once-and-for-all qualification, cf. Heb 7:27: "*Greek, 'who made us meet (fit),' Not 'is making us meet' by progressive growth in holiness; but once for all made us meet. It is...the Father's work by adoption in putting us in a new standing, namely, that of children,*" as in "*power (right) to become children of God,*" Jn 1:12.

What exactly are we qualified for? We are qualified "*to be partakers in the inheritance of the saints in light.*" The term partaker is the noun *meris*, which means "a part, share, or portion of that which has been divided or apportioned." The words "*in the inheritance*" point us to what has been given to the children of God. Inheritance is the Greek *kleros*, which literally meant "a lot, a portion, that which is cast, or drawn, or obtained by casting lots." Paul often mentioned our heavenly inheritance, see Rm 8:16-17; Eph 1:10-12, 14, 18; 3:6; Ax 20:32; 26:18; Gal 3:26-29; Tit 3:7; 1 Pet 1:3-5. "*He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions*

under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance," Heb 9:15. Notice that it is the *called* who "*receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.*" Promise is a key word in Hebrews and is inseparably related to the concept of inheritance, 9:15 and 4:1. What is the promised inheritance? It is the New Covenant, the New Jerusalem. The blessings which flows from the death of Christ are our eternal inheritance.

The words delivered and conveyed relate to the themes of the Old Testament. Delivered is from the Greek word *rhuomai*, which carries the idea of rescue and also suggests what is an accomplished event. We were delivered at a point in the past—when we were baptized for the remission of sins. This deliverance is absolutely finished. There is no progress in this rescue. It is an event. Our spiritual rescue is like the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. "*Power of darkness*" indicates Satan. Power is the Greek *exousia*, "authority, power, or ruling power." Darkness in Scripture symbolizes ignorance, falsehood, sin, delusion, and Satan. Here darkness is seen as the kingdom of Satan which has power over us. This exact expression, *power of darkness*, is used another time in the New Testament. When Jesus was arrested in the garden, He challenged those who came out to arrest him that night and asked, "*When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness,*" Lk 22:53. In other words,

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Psalm 133:1



Fill your canteen in 2013

"May you be filled with all the fullness of God."

—Ephesians 3:19

Giving Thanks,, from p. 2

"Why did you come out with swords and clubs? I've been around for a while. You could have arrested me at any time." They were acting on behalf of the power of darkness, as do all who oppose Christ. Most believers probably do not understand that we have already been delivered from the power of darkness. When the church was established on Pentecost, Satan was defeated and destroyed. Although Satan is still the ruler or "god of this world," 2 Cor 4:4, we are no longer under his authority. The whole world still lies in the power of the evil one, cf. Rm 16:20, but Christians are free of that. Look at what Christ accomplished: He destroyed the devil, Heb 2:14; 1 Jn 3:8. Many Christians are still fearful about the devil's power—we may want him around to have him to blame for our sin.

Conveyed is from the Greek *methis-temi* that carries with it a special significance. "In the ancient world, when one empire won a victory over another, it was the custom to take the population of the defeated country and transfer it lock, stock, and barrel to the conqueror's land. Thus the people of the northern kingdom [of Israel] were taken away to Assyria, and the people of the southern kingdom [of Judah] were taken away to Babylon. So Paul says that God has transferred the Christian to his own kingdom. That

was not only a transference but a rescue," William Barclay, *New Testament Words*, SCM Press LTD, London, 1964, pp.133-134. This transference means God's rule, personal care, and provision for our lives.

Redemption means "deliverance at a cost" or "release by payment of a price." Imbedded in the word redemption, *apolutrosis*, is the little word *lutron*, "ransom." In other words, the idea of redemption is rescue or release by payment of a ransom. This concept is always in view, cf. Ex 6:6; 15:13; Ps 74:2; 78:35. It is clear that redemption is based on some great expenditure by God. New Testament terms for redemption always have in mind a price paid. What's the ransom? What's the payment? "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many," Mark 10:45. The life of the Son of Man was the ransom paid in redemption. Redemption is in Christ Jesus, because Jesus is the ransom. It is through the Lord Jesus and the believer's relationship to Him that this rescue occurs. He gave his life so that there could be release and deliverance. Here is the foundation of our justification: Christ paid the price for our release from sin, guilt, and condemnation. This is why God now, as a gift by his grace in paying the ransom, justifies the ungodly. All spiritual blessings are owing to the death of Christ. Here and in Ephesians 1:7, after the word redemption, Paul adds, "the forgiveness of sins." This is an explanatory equivalent to the term redemption. Forgiveness is what redemption means in terms of its results for the believer. Forgiveness is the Greek word *aphesis*, which means "release" as from a debt, or "pardon, cancellation of an obligation, punishment, or guilt." Do we really know what it means to be forgiven and cleansed? God forgives sins; the

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Discipleship Here At Home

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help, and comfort here and away

Mark Campbell—moved to Grace Care in Glenwood Springs; making gains; Mark's daughter **Tori** is visiting us today

Judy Sartin's aunt **Vallie Ek**—back in treatment for uterine cancer; **Judy's** grand son **Tristan Sartin**—recent autism diagnosis **Rod Green's** mother, **Shirley**—recovering from broken wrist

The **Reameses** need prayers for their daughter and son-in-law, **Sandra** and **Nathan Hampton**, who are practicing bigamy and are reviling the **Reameses'** other two children, **Matt** and **Amy**. Please pray for the **Hamptons'** eight children, too **Valerie Greenwalt**—rejoice that biopsy for tumor in colon showed no cancer; surgical consult tomorrow for tumor removal

Bereaved The **Campbells** and **Thompsons** are grieving the loss of Pat's mother, **Ruth Hice**, last Tues. The family is in AR for services with Pat's father, **Delmar Hice**, 28345 Highway 69 W, London, AR 72847. The **Hadderses** are in KY for the funeral of Jonathan's grandmother, **Frances Selvidge**, who passed away last Wed. They return Wed night.

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Logan Corray; Rocco Sangellino Jr; Addison Tope; Pat Wilkes—asthma **Pearl Chapman**—leg pains; pancreatitis **Nell Free**—pacemaker, heart; back pain **Kirk Johnson**—worsening MS; needs help around his house **Menards**—aging; **Lloyd**, diabetes; **Virginia**, worsening rapid macular degeneration; high BP **Lynda Szymanski**—COPD, lung

Expecting **Amy Vander Kooi**—Aug Job concerns **Andrew Tope, Linda Szymanski, Lorenzo Gonzalez, and Frank Savarese** are seeking jobs.

Traveling **Pat Wilkes** is at a hymn writing class in MO this week

Giving Thanks to the Father, Col 1:10-11, from p. 3

slate is wiped clean. Every sin, no matter how vile or ugly, is forgiven. That's how great our God is. That's how wonderful His salvation is. Indeed, we are people who must thank our God. Here in Colossians 1:12-14, the apostle has given us a brief glimpse of some of the wonderful reasons we are to be thankful—because God has **qualified** us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light, He has **delivered** us from the power of darkness, He has **conveyed** us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, and He has **provided redemption** with the forgiveness of sins. Have we received these blessings? They should cause us to be thankful always! Thanksgiving is a matter of response to facts of revelation. Being thankful requires a proper comprehension of the reasons why we should be thankful. Thankfulness cannot occur in a vacuum of ignorance. That is why the Bible gives us reasons to be thankful. For example, Psalm 100 gives reasons to be thankful to God. Note the relationship in this psalm between the command to give thanks and the reasons: we are to give thanks *because God is good; *because He has made us; *because we are His people and His sheep; and *because His mercy and truth are everlasting, enduring to all generations.

HOW CAN WE GROW IN THANKFULNESS?

1. Bible study. Thanksgiving is motivated by Bible doctrine: *“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. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him,”* Col 3:16-17. As we come to know God through His Word, we can always have a thankful heart.

2. Count your blessings! Focus on what is good. If we want to grow in gratitude, count our blessings. Sometimes we have to recognize them first! Start by asking God to open our eyes to see our abundance in Christ. Begin by recognizing all that we have in Christ. That will change our entire perspective and enable us to praise God for what we have. Consumer culture and advertising would have us feel constantly unsatisfied. In response, we should practice gratitude as a spiritual discipline. List simple, basic things we enjoy each day but easily take for granted: "Thank You for the roof over my head. Thank You for the comfortable bed I slept in last night. Thank You for the cup of coffee I had at breakfast." William Law, in his Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life writes, *“Who is the greatest saint in the world? It is not he who prays most or fasts most; it is not he who gives most alms, or is most eminent for temperance, chastity, or justice, but it is he who is always thankful to God, who wills everything that God wills, who receives everything as an instance of God's goodness, and who has a heart always ready to praise God for it.”* The greatest singular act of personal worship that we can render to God is to have a thankful heart. Thanksgiving ultimately recognizes God as the source of everything. God created us, and we are to be thankful. Thanksgiving promotes contentment about our possessions, position, and providence by focusing our thoughts on the blessings God has already given to us. How are we showing thankfulness today?

Westside church of Christ

meets at
13789 W. 8th Avenue
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Pastors

Larry Campbell (303) 462-4987
DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Westside-Church-of-Christ/276475819148309

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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This morning:

“Be Careful Whom You Listen To,”
Jim Reingrover

This afternoon:

Paul's Prison Epistles Series
Colossians 3:18-4:18, Kory Tope