

Text— Colossians 1:12-23

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

Although we celebrated the national Thanksgiving holiday just a few days ago, it behooves us to never forget that we have reasons to thank God each and every day for both temporal and spiritual blessings which He richly provides. We now enter the Advent season of the church year as we look forward to the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. There is indeed much reason to celebrate the birth of our Savior with thankfulness to God, for Romans 6:23 clearly states: “the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Our sermon text is taken from the New Testament book of Colossians which begins with the following words: “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother, To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth.” (Colossians 1:1-6)

Hence, the Apostle Paul’s epistle to the Colossians is addressed to his fellow Christians: folks graciously gifted with faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord— faith wrought by the Holy Ghost as He worked in and through the Gospel, for it remains forever true that “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. [And] no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” (Romans 10:17; 1 Corinthians 12:3)

Our Scripture selection supplies us with interesting information concerning what the Apostle Paul and Timothy his brother in the ministry regularly prayed for in regards to their fellow Christians. Thus, the Apostle Paul thereby urges all of us Christians:

“GIVE THANKS FOR YOUR HEAVENLY INHERITANCE”

With that as our theme may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) Who we are to thank for our heavenly inheritance
- 2) How our heavenly inheritance has been provided
- 3) How we actually personally receive our heavenly inheritance

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Verse 12, ----- (Colossians 1:12)

Our text opens by informing us that it was Paul and Timothy’s practice to regularly pray for their fellow Christians at Colosse by *Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.*

Looking back at the second verse of Colossians chapter one we see that the “Father” Paul prayed to is none other than “God our Father”— our heavenly Father. Accordingly, we likewise should regularly give thanks to God the Father who has made us suitable to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, yea, the inheritance of heaven, for we read in 1 Peter 1:3-5, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” And, heaven is the place where saints, where all believers in

Jesus Christ, dwell in glorious divine light, for Revelation 22:5 reports: “there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.”

Fellow Christians, wonderfully better it is to dwell with the Lord in His light in heaven rather than being consigned to the darkness of hell, “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” (Mark 9:44) Accordingly, we should regularly thank God our Father which art in heaven for our heavenly inheritance since Lamentations 3:22 plainly states: “It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.”

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As we ponder the next several verses of our text let us see how our heavenly inheritance has been provided.

Verses 13 & 14, ----- (Colossians 1:13-14)

Consider the fact that God our Father *hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.* Fellow Christians, God our heavenly Father has graciously delivered us from the power of darkness, the power of the devil, and translated us, transferred us, into the kingdom of His dear Son, Jesus Christ. It's as 1 Peter 2:9-10 says to all Christians: “ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.”

Indeed, by nature we were stuck in the darkness of sin and Satan's power, but thankfully our heavenly Father delivered us, for Ephesians 2:1-10 informs us Christians: “you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world,

according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

Take it to heart that the Kingdom of God's dear Son Jesus Christ is the Holy Christian Church— Jesus' Kingdom of grace now on earth and His Kingdom of glory later in heaven! Furthermore, our heavenly inheritance has been provided by God the Father through the atoning work of His dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, *In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.* Yes, for 1 John 1:7 informs us: “the blood of Jesus Christ [God's] Son cleanseth us from all sin.” And, Hebrews 10:4 states: “it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.” Oh beloved, all the Old Testament bloody sacrifices were but a picture that pointed ahead to the one supreme sacrifice Jesus would and did make to pay for all the sins of all people with His own holy and precious blood.

My friends, take it to heart that Jesus' blood is the only blood that could pay for our sins, yea the sins of the whole world, since Jesus' blood is of infinite value because Jesus is true God in addition to being true man. Yes, Jesus Christ is “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29) And so, Acts 4:12 tells us, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none

other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Let us therefore regularly thank and praise the Lord Jesus Christ for redeeming us with His holy and precious blood.

Verses 15-17, -----. (Colossians 1:15-17)

Our text tells us that God's dear Son is in fact *the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature*. Think about it. God the Father is invisible to us with our human eyes, for John 1:18 informs us: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." And, John 4:24 states: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Nevertheless, Jesus Christ Himself is the *image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature*, and is therefore God almighty fully equal to the Father, and eternally generated – eternally begotten – of the Father. Furthermore, Jesus can be seen and is the perfect reflection of the Father, for Jesus once said to His disciple named Philip: "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." (John 14:9) Hence, in all honesty Jesus states in John 10:30, "I and my Father are one." Thus, Jesus Christ is amazing!

Yes, Jesus Christ is amazing, *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*

Think of it: God's only begotten Son Jesus Christ is the eternal Creator and Preserver of all things. Jesus Christ is the incarnate Word of God, and we read in John 1:1-3, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

Furthermore, Jesus Christ preserves and upholds all things by His divine power, for we read in Hebrews 1:1-8, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers

by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." Jesus Christ lives and reigns to all eternity, and God the Father has provided us a heavenly inheritance through Him. Thus, Jesus Christ is amazing!

Verse 18, -----. (Colossians 1:18)

Note it well: Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, *is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence*. No sinful human being, be he pope, priest, pastor, or televangelist is to be addressed as your eminence nor is he or she the head of the holy Christian Church; rather, JESUS CHRIST THE LORD IS HEAD OF THE HOLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH and HE HAS THE PREEMINENCE! Yes, it's as we also read in Ephesians 5:23, "Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body."

Jesus Christ is the firstborn from the dead in that He bodily rose from the dead and dwells in a glorified body, for Holy Writ reports: "now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the

firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 15:20-23, 53-57) Thus, our heavenly inheritance has been provided by Christ our Lord. Jesus Christ is amazing!

Verses 19 & 20, -----. (Colossians 1:19-20)

The cooperation between God the Father and God the Son, together with God the Holy Ghost, is always perfect since the three divine Persons are but the one true God. So, it's not surprising that our text reports concerning Jesus Christ that *it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.*

Concerning Jesus Christ Colossians 2:9 relates: "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Consequently, Jesus could and did make *peace through the blood of his cross, reconciling all things unto himself*, whether things in heaven or earth. Jesus Christ paid for all the sins of all people, whether they were born before He came to earth and accomplished His redemptive work or after He had come to earth and accomplished His redemptive work while nailed to the cross of Calvary, for 2 Corinthians 5:19 reports: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." Therefore, Philippians 2:9-11 plainly states concerning Christ: "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and

things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Thus, we again see that our heavenly inheritance has been provided through the atoning work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who shed His holy and infinitely precious blood to pay for all the sins of all people.

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As we ponder our text to its conclusion, let us see how we actually personally receive our heavenly inheritance.

Verses 21-23, -----. (Colossians 1:21-23)

Note well that our personally receiving our heavenly inheritance is based on Christ's atoning work, Christ's reconciling us, and NOT on our own works in whole or even in the least part, for our text says: *And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight.*

We Christians can only be presented holy and unblameable and unproveable in God's sight when we are clothed in the perfect righteousness of Christ; and, we only personally have that perfect righteousness if we *continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which we have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof the Apostle Paul was made a minister.*

Yes, it's as Holy Writ reports in the book of Romans in the following words: "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is

by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” (Romans 3:19-26; 5:1; 1:16-17)

Thus, a living, God-given, heart-deep faith in Jesus Christ as one’s personal Savior and Lord is a necessity if we would actually personally receive a heavenly inheritance when we depart this life, for John 3:16-18 states in no uncertain terms: “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

Let us therefore daily and sincerely repent of our sins; let us, by the power of the Holy Ghost working through the Gospel in our hearts, continue to cling to Christ Jesus in heart-deep faith as our personal Savior and Lord; and then, let us regularly give thanks for our heavenly inheritance which is certain because God our Father has made us meet to be partakers thereof. Amen.

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