

Reasons To Be Thankful

Colossians 1:12-14

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Go back with me to Colossians 1:9. Paul says, “For this cause we also, since the day we heard it,”—he’s coupling his name with Timothy—“do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will.” I told you last time we were together that there are basically two petitions. The first is in verse 9, “. . . that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;” and the second petition is in verse 10, “That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness.” The two petitions, “. . . that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will,” and the second is that in verse 10, “That ye might walk worthy of the Lord,” and beginning in verse 12, which is our text tonight, Paul begins to give thanks, “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet,”—or fit or qualified us—“to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”

I guess I’m kind of like a broken record, I’m always quoting hymns, but this song reminds me of a great old hymn, “Count your blessings.” How many of you know that song? Count your blessings, name them one by one; Count your many blessings, see what God hath done. As Christians I think so often we count our bummers and don’t count our blessings—count your bummers, name them one by one; count your many bummers, see what God hath not done, right?

Paul was a man with a grateful heart and a thankful heart. What is it you are grateful and thankful for? As believers, one of the indications that we are walking worthy of the Lord and pleasing Him is that we have an attitude of gratitude. Now, remember Paul is in prison when he’s writing to the believers at Colossae. Technically, he’s under house arrest, he’s in chains and a prisoner, but had an attitude of gratitude. He starts with petition, asking God to do something, and then he moves to praise, thanking God for who He is. We should have the same balance in our prayers. Our prayers should be petition, “Lord, give us this day our daily bread,” but they should also have praise, “Our Father, which art in heaven, praise Your holy name,” and we should be worshiping God and thanking God for who He is, for what He’s done, and the blessings that God has given to us.

Again, a reminder, in verse 9, Paul asks that God would give them, “. . . the knowledge of his will,” and we discover that that will of God is found in the Word of God. You cannot know the will of God without knowing the Word of God, and, verse 10, “That ye might walk worthy of the Lord.” We broke it down and looked at the worthy walk and saw that first of all it was a pleasing walk, verse 10; secondly, it was a fruitful walk, verse 10; thirdly, it was a growing walk, verse 10; and verse 11, it was a powerful walk. Peek at it with me just for a second, “Strengthened with

all might, according to his glorious power,”—there it is—“unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness.”

Paul wanted them to experience God’s power, power to be patient, that’s to abide under pressure; and to be longsuffering, that’s patient with people, with joyfulness, at the end of verse 11. He just mentions joyfulness at the end of verse 11, and what’s the first thing he mentions in verse 12? Thankfulness. One of the evident signs of the worthy walk, of the powerful walk, is an attitude of gratitude. It’s a happy heart rejoicing in the Lord, and specifically not rejoicing in circumstances, which many times can be difficult and hard, but rejoicing in the Lord. Amen? Rejoice in the Lord, again I say, Rejoice in the Lord, not our circumstances, but that the Lord is working in them and through them for our good and for His glory.

Tonight in our text we see one more characteristic as it were of the worthy walk, that is, that it is a thankful walk. Let me give you a couple of other verses before we unpack this text. In Philippians 4:6 it says, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving,”—there’s prayer and thanksgiving—“let your requests be made known to God.” Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God your needs, and don’t forget to thank him for His answers. Write down Colossians 4:2. Paul says, “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.” Again, in Colossians 3:17, “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.” Notice all the references in Colossians, again written with chains on his ankles and wrists, to be thankful before the Lord.

Now, why does Paul include thanksgiving as part of his worthy walk? I believe that contextually that’s what he’s doing. One of the characteristics of a worthy walk, a pleasing walk, is a thankful walk. My answer to that question is that Paul believes that thanksgiving is a clear hallmark of the Spirit-filled life. This is kind of difficult for me because I naturally and sinfully lean toward being a complainer. You’re shocked, right? “Not Pastor John.” My poor wife has had people come up to her and say, “It must be just amazing to live with Pastor John.” “Oh, yes, it’s wonderful. Yes.” I don’t know about that. I always kind of take a check to realize that if I am griping and complaining, and I am very gifted in that, it’s an evident sign that I’m not walking in the Spirit, that I’m not filled with the Spirit.

Someone said, “Joy is the flag flown high from the castle of our heart when the King is in residence there.” It’s so true. If you’re not a joyful Christian, you’re not a Spirit-filled Christian. You may be able to exercise the gifts of the Spirit, but where’s the joy of the Lord which is your strength? So, the evident sign is that your life overflows with the joy of the Lord. Again, Colossians 2:6-7, look at it with me quickly. Paul says, “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: 7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.” Paul again, over and over is talking about overflowing with thanksgiving to the Lord.

Now, in our text, as I said, Paul is not praying for spiritual blessing, he’s praying that they would be thankful for the blessings they already have. I think one of the tragedies of many Christians

is that they don't know how blessed they are in Christ. You can't enjoy what you don't know you have. If you don't know you have something, you can't enjoy it, right? So, you need to know biblically all the blessings that are yours in Christ.

Now, I may sound like a broken record because this is a theme that I touch on so often, but I think it's because, as we just preached the Word, it's all there in the Scriptures, and that is, Ephesians 1 where Paul talks about the blessings that we have in Christ from the Father, the blessings we have from the Son, the blessings we have from the Holy Spirit, and that they're all ours in Christ which means—listen carefully—every Christian, every born-again believer in Christ, member of the body of Christ, placed in Christ the moment of salvation possess equally all these blessings. They're not progressive. You don't have to grow, you don't have to mature, you just have to know they're yours, then you have to just believe by faith and receive the blessings that are yours because you are placed positionally at salvation in Christ. We need to understand our position in Christ and the blessings that are ours.

There are a lot of Christians that are sadly praying for things that are already theirs in Christ and in a roundabout way . . . I was reading one commentary today said that that's really not believing God. It's dishonoring to God is what it said. It really hit me like a ton of bricks. It's dishonoring God to not be thankful for what He's already given us and to be asking us to give Him what He has already given us when we don't believe His Word and trust Him by faith and accept what is ours in Christ. These are blessings tonight that every Christian shares equally, no matter how long they've walked with Christ, no matter how far they've progressed in their sanctification, their justification, their position in Christ, brings them all these blessings equally, and that is so very, very important. All these blessings for all Christians, they all equally possess. So, given to us by the Father, through the Son, in Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

Now, there are three blessings every Christian should be thankful for in our text. You could technically make it four, and I'll explain why, but those three blessings are, verse 12, the Father hath qualified us; verse 13, the Father hath delivered us and transferred us. I've joined those two together. They could be two separate blessings, but "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son," and verse 14, the third blessing that's ours tonight, "In whom,"—that is, Christ—"we have redemption." It's very simple, but not simplistic. These are blessings that we need to be thankful for, and if we understand them, we'll wake up every day and count our blessings. You'll be able to at least count three, and, as I said, you can break it into four; so write these down, see them in the text, and let them sink deep into your heart. There's something that you can be thankful for, and thank God for them when you go to bed, thank God for them when you get up, and thank God for them throughout the day.

Let's look at them individually. First, we should be thankful that God the Father hath qualified us. Go back with me to verse 12, "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet,"—or fit or qualified us—"to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." I want you to note in verse 12 who we give thanks to—God the Father. Amen? Why? Well, because it says that He is, ". . . the Father of lights, with whom is no . . . shadow of turning." And, God is good, God

is merciful, God is gracious, God is kind, and all blessings come from God. We sing, Praise God from whom all blessings flow. The older I get, the more I walk with God, the more I realize everything, everything I have, comes as a gift by the mercy and the grace of God. We should be humbly thankful for all God's blessings, but our thanksgiving is directed toward a Person.

I've always wondered how the unbeliever, the non-Christian, celebrates Thanksgiving. Who are they thanking? When they actually say, "I'm thankful," well, to whom? You're just thankful to your lucky stars or thankful that things are aligned in the stars for you, that it's just happenstance? As believers, we have an Individual, our personal God and Father who loves us and cares for us. It kind of reminds us of the fact that our gratitude attitude is directed to our Father who loves me. Do you know you all have, as a believer, a Father in heaven? When Jesus taught us to pray, "Our Father," He used the word Abba, our Abba in heaven. He is perfect in all His ways. He loves you like no one else, and so we're thanking our Father in heaven.

Why do we thank our Father in heaven? Verse 12, He " . . . hath made us meet," my King James Bible has, but the better translation for our modern English would be 'fit' or another good one would be 'qualified.' Those are all synonyms for that word "meet." He's qualified us. He's made us fit or qualified for heaven—for the Kingdom of God right now and for the Kingdom of God in the future and the heaven eternal state in eternity.

Now, it's not character, which is our practice, it's our position and our standing that qualifies us. You, as a believer, are not qualified to go to heaven because you pray three-and-a-half hours a day. If you pray four hours, you're even more qualified. You're a super saint. You get to join the 'deeper life' club. If you go to church five times a week instead of once a week, then you're like super, hyperqualified. This is not progressional. I pray and hope that the light goes on and you understand this. The moment you are born again, you are fit and qualified for heaven. Isn't that amazing? I just so happen to believe that you'll always be qualified, that you can't lose your salvation. There's nothing to indicate that in this text, that's for sure. So, the moment you believe in Jesus Christ and you are regenerated or born again, you are made fit or qualified for heaven. And, it's not your practice, it's your position. This is, again, why I say I probably sound to you like a broken record because I keep harping on it, but it's one of the most transforming biblical truths of understanding your position in Christ—not your practice, your position. Practice is your sanctification that flows out of your justification which is your position. It means the moment we are saved or born again, we are qualified for heaven.

Remember when Jesus was dying on the cross and there were two crosses on either side of Him? We call them the two thieves, and they were both reviling Him and then one thief had a repentant heart? He said, "Lord, remember me when You enter into Your Kingdom." What did Jesus say? "You're not fit." Is that what He said? "You're not qualified. Why, you're a thief! You're dying justly for your wicked crimes. Who do you think you are? You haven't had religious experiences." What Jesus said was, "Today you will be with Me in paradise." That's a picture of what we read here. We go from guilty, lost, sinners, we believe in Jesus Christ, and sometimes it's as simple as just saying, "Lord, remember me." " . . . whosoever shall call on the

name of the Lord shall be saved,” and it’s “Today you will be with Me in paradise.” Now, we may not literally go to heaven immediately, but we are living in the Kingdom of God immediately. We’re going to see that we’re transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of light of the Son of His love. So, God qualifies us. How marvelous that truly is!

Now, note that God is the One who qualifies them. When you look at verse 12 it says, “. . . which hath,” so the idea is that God the Father has, “made us meet.” The Greek grammar here actually indicates that this qualified state is something God does, you cannot do. When you believe in Jesus, when you repent in Jesus, regenerated and born again, it is all the work of God, all to the glory of God, all done by God—no boasting, no credit is by your part. You can’t go around and say, “Man, I really got myself in shape for heaven. I really got myself fit for heaven.” Positionally, no you did not, it was the work of God and the Son and God the Holy Spirit—God the Father qualifying you for heaven. It was done by Him.

What are we qualified for? The answer is heaven. Notice verse 12, “. . . to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” Notice that word “light” there. We become, “. . . partakers of the inheritance,” so we were placed in the family of God and thus we become children of God who will inherit heaven. Jesus said in John 14, “I prepare a place in my Father’s house, I’ll come again, and I’ll take you that where I am you may be also.” If you are a Christian, guess where you’re going? To heaven. When you realize that, be thankful, be glad. Heaven is your home, and you’re living, as we’re going to see, right now in the Kingdom of His dear Son.

Another illustration would be the Old Testament nation of Israel when they inherited the Promised Land. They came out of Egypt where they were slaves, and they inherited the Promised Land which God prepared for them, God made the way for them, God laid it all out for them—houses they didn’t build, vineyards they didn’t plant. Everything was just provided for by God. They just went in and took the land of Promise that God gave them. So, for us, it starts now with the work of the Holy Spirit convicting us, regenerating us, and indwelling us so we are complete in Christ, ready and fit for heaven. Amen?

Here’s the second blessing in verse 13. Write it down. The Father has delivered and transferred us. Now, as I said, this is technically two blessings, but I’ve combined them together in one verse, “Who hath delivered,” or some have rescued us and transferred us or translated us. Notice verse 13, “Who hath,” now, I can’t wait until I get to verse 14. Let me point out something that you should mark or highlight in your Bible. In verse 12, it’s “. . . hath made us,” circle the word “hath.” In verse 13, “. . . hath delivered us,” circle or underline the word “hath,” and then the second time again, verse 13, “. . . hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son;” and in verse 14, “. . . we have.” So, you have “hath” three times and “have” once in verse 14. This is what God has—notice the tense—done. This is what God has already done for us, so you don’t have to pray for these things. You don’t have to ask God for these things, they’re already yours in Christ; but you should be thanking God for them and living in light of them. It’s so very important.

The verb Paul used, “delivered,” can also be translated transferred, is only used of God in the

New Testament. Again, as in all these blessings, they are the work of God. God is the One who rescues us. God is the One who transfers us from darkness to light. We were helpless, and only God can deliver us. Man's greatest problem is sin—one little word with three letters, s-i-n. Whatever happened to sin? You don't hear many sermons about sin anymore, do you? But it's in the Bible, and that is man's greatest need. It's a problem that no scientist, no philosopher, no psychiatrist, no educator, no politician can resolve. Only God can forgive sins.

This Sunday morning in our study of the gospel of Luke, we're going to read about the four men who put their lame friend on a mat, a couch, carried him up on top of the roof of a house, tore the roof up, and lowered him down before Jesus to be healed. Jesus said to him, "Son, thy sins are forgiven." The religious leaders looked on and said, "Who can forgive sins but God alone." I thought, That's it. Only God can forgive sins. So Jesus, to prove that He is God, says to the man, "Get up. Pick up your couch and walk." He stood up, rolled up his bed and walked out of the room. Only God can forgive sins. There's nothing that you can do to be forgiven, except for repent and believe and trust in Jesus Christ.

In 1 John 1:9, confess your sin. Do you know what that means? It means just to agree with God that you're a sinner. That literal word, 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins," means that we say, "Yes, I have sinned," and we realize we're a sinner and (SNAP!) we're forgiven. But God's the One that does the forgiving. We can't merit it. We can't earn it. We can't deserve it. We don't do it by works of righteousness, it's given to us as a free gift; and the moment we trust Christ, we're going to see that we are forgiven. In this case, we're delivered and we are transferred. Only God can deliver us from sin and from Satan's kingdom.

Notice in verse 13, "Who hath delivered us from the power,"—or jurisdiction—"of darkness," so this is the power or jurisdiction or authority of Satan which we lived in before conversion, and He's delivered us from that kingdom of darkness. How did He do that? The Father sent the Son to rescue us. Jesus came, " . . . to seek and to save that which was lost." Jesus came from heaven, as we have preached so many times here from this pulpit, on a rescue mission. He came to rescue us. He came to deliver us. What an awesome thing that is! To deliver us literally means to draw to oneself as to rescue. So, God in His grace drew us out of Satan's kingdom to Himself to rescue us. He sent the Son, Jesus came, " . . . to seek and to save that which was lost." He came to rescue us from sin's power and from sin's penalty. This is the negative side.

Not only does God deliver us from Satan's kingdom and darkness, but here's the positive side, verse 13, He now transfers us or " . . . translates us into the kingdom of his dear Son." In the Greek, that phrase literally is the Son of His love. I don't know what more to say. I preach this so many times, but He takes you out of Satan's kingdom where you lived in bondage and darkness and in following your passions, and He transfers you out of that kingdom by rescuing you and putting you in His Kingdom. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." You, as a Christian, are living in the Kingdom right now, that there's a literal Kingdom coming when the King comes, and there's the Kingdom of heaven when we spend eternity in that eternal state. We literally are the King's

kids, and we're living in His Kingdom right now. How marvelous! How wonderful!

In the Sermon on the Mount you have Kingdom living now. If you read Matthew 5-7, that's how Kingdom living is lived out in our world. That's what the Sermon on the Mount is about—Kingdom living now. So, as a Christian, you are in God's Kingdom and you need to live it out in your daily lives; but He's transferred us. Again, this happens to every person the moment they are born again. I'm going to explain some terms. Born again means to be born from above, it comes from John 3, but the term is referring to what's called regeneration, which means you're given new life—you're dead in your sins but then quickened or regenerated. You're given new life. That's the work of God by the Holy Spirit. That's what constitutes salvation.

The minute that happens, it happens to all believers. If you have not been born again or regenerated, you are not a Christian. That's why it's kind of a misnomer to say, "I'm a born-again Christian," as though there are Christians who are not born again. The only kind of Christian there is, is the born-again Christian. You're a Christian because you're born again, because you've been given new life—the life of God in your soul. Every Christian has this equally true, so there's no second-class citizens in the Kingdom of God. This is why I reject this concept that if you're saved, that you can be missing some blessings from God, not so. You might know what they are, you may not be appropriating them by faith, but they're theirs, they're yours for the ask for the receiving after the taking by faith. The more you read God's Word and stand by faith and believe that, the more you're going to live in victory and walk in the blessings and be grateful for the things that God has given to you.

Again, Exodus, in Israel coming out of Egypt, is a picture of them being in bondage, coming out, and being transferred from Egypt to the Promised Land. Actually, this is in what's called the aorist tense of the verb 'transferred' refers to a decisive transfer which occurred at the moment of our past salvation or conversion, and it stands once and for all. All Christians, the moment you were saved, were translated or transferred. If you're a Christian, you have been transferred out of Satan's kingdom into God's Kingdom. How marvelous that is!

The third blessing is in verse 14, and let's look at it. It is the Father has redeemed us. I love this! "In whom," now, the 'in whom' is a reference to the end of verse 13, " . . . his dear Son." Remember when Jesus was baptized and the Father spoke from heaven and said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,"—in whom My soul delights. This is the Father's love for the Son. When we are in Christ, we are accepted by the Father as though we were Christ Himself. God the Father sees you as He sees His own beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Think about that—His righteousness given to you and the Father sees you as forgiven and complete in His Son. "In whom,"—that is, Christ, the Son of His love—"we have,"—there's another one of the clear possessions of the believer—"redemption,"—notice that word, and we are redeemed what?—"through his blood,"—and what does it mean? It means our sins are forgiven. This is such a marvelous, marvelous, marvelous text! It's so deep and full and rich that it's hard to even expound on because of its depth.

Now, let me give you five facts about our redemption. I want to unpack each phrase of verse

14. First of all, our redemption is in Christ. Notice the phrase, "In whom." It's only found in Jesus Christ our Redeemer. You're not going to be redeemed by Buddha. You won't be redeemed by Confucius. You won't be redeemed by some politician or some scientist or some other ascended master, some religious leader. Jesus is the Redeemer. There are a lot of great theologians that feel, and I agree, that the grandest word describing our salvation is the word redeemed or redemption. Jesus is our Redeemer. We have fallen into sin, and He rescues us and redeems us back to God the Father.

Now, I want you to notice redemption's certainty, verse 14, ". . . we have." So, it's in Christ, in Christ alone. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Its certainty is, ". . . we have." Again, John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," not maybe, not hopefully, not cross your fingers/hang onto your rabbit's foot, ". . . have everlasting life." It's certainty.

Notice, thirdly, its meaning. What does it mean to be redeemed? The word redeemed means to purchase and set free by paying a price. To redeem something means to buy something. I'm old enough to remember those little stamps that you used to get. What were they called? Green stamps, those little stamp books. My mom used to save them and put them in a book and go to the green stamp store and cash them in and get a coffee pot or something for the kitchen. You're redeeming them, you're giving them to buy something. So, Jesus bought us. He bought us, and then He sets us free.

This word is from the Bible taken from the world of slavery. The Bible doesn't endorse slavery. The Bible doesn't encourage slavery, it just records the fact that it existed. That was the world of the Bible at the time. It gives us the picture here of using this term of redemption—that we were slaves to sin; Jesus, by His death on the cross, bought us and set us free. He bought us or redeemed us and set us free. You can go into the slave market and buy yourself a slave, and that slave became your property. If you so choose, you could set them free. You could give them freedom or their liberty.

The picture is that God bought us, and we're going to see the price, the blood of Christ; then He set us free, but we chose in love to still serve Him. This is what was known in the Bible days as what's called a bonds slave. When the bonds slave is referred to in the Bible, it uses the Greek word *doûlos*, a bonds slave. We're *doûlos*, we are bonds slaves. What that means is that we chose by free choice to be slaves to Jesus Christ, to be His slaves, to be His free men. He set us free, but we said, "I love You for buying my freedom or redeeming me, and I want to live for You. I want to serve You," so He becomes our Lord and Master, and we become His *doûlos*, His bonds slaves. We are emancipated, we are freed, yet we voluntarily choose to follow Him and live for Him.

Notice, fourthly, redemption's means, verse 14, ". . . through his blood." This phrase is omitted in some modern translations. Don't sweat it. Whether it belongs here or not, some scholars debate, but it is truly biblical. At the same time Paul wrote Colossians, he also wrote

Ephesians. In Ephesians 1:7, Paul says, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." Also, in Colossians 1:20, he says, "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross," so it's clearly taught in the Bible, and I believe it belongs here in this text, is that we are redeemed by and through the blood of Christ.

Now, when the Bible refers to the blood of Jesus Christ, it's referring to more than just His physical blood in His body, it's a figure of speech for the atoning sacrifice, His death on the cross. When we speak of the blood of Christ, we're speaking of the cross of Christ, we're speaking of the death of Christ, we're speaking of the finished work of Christ, that Jesus died, did a work. Some say, "Well, salvation is not a work," yet God did do a work to save us. We don't work our soul to save, but He died or did the work of redemption for us on the cross. The price of Him buying us to set us free is the death of Jesus Christ upon the Cross.

Write down 1 Peter 1:18-19 where Peter says we're bought with a price, we're bought with the price of the blood of Jesus Christ, " . . . as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Remember the Passover Lamb again? The Lamb died, they were spared. They were delivered. They were transferred to the Kingdom of their dear Son.

The fifth is the results, verse 14. What does redemption bring us? " . . . the forgiveness of sins." Again, all these blessings happen the moment we are born again—we are qualified for heaven, we're delivered/transferred to God's Kingdom, and we are redeemed or bought by the blood of Jesus Christ. Now, this phrase, 'forgiven,' literally means to send away. Do you know the etymology of the word forgive means to send away? It's taken from the concept of the scapegoat where you pronounce your sins on the goat, you'd release the goat, and he'd run off in the distant hills. It was a picture or reminder of, "There goes my sins. Praise the Lord!" I don't know what they did when the goat came back, throw rocks at it. Aren't you glad our sins weren't taken away by a goat that comes back? You open the door the next morning, "Baaaa, baaaa!" It's on the front porch, "Aaaaaah!"

The Bible says in Psalm 103:12, David writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." That's what it means, He carries them away. John the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God,"—pointing at Jesus—"which taketh"—carries—"away the sin of the world."

If you're struggling to find something to be thankful for and you're a Christian, you have been forgiven. You ought to put your head on the pillow every night when you go to bed and say, "Thank You, God, for my forgiveness. Thank You for washing me clean in the blood of Jesus Christ." You ought to wake up in the morning, or when you wake up in the middle of the night like we old people do with your mind racing a hundred miles an hour, start to count your blessings . . . don't count sheep, Count your blessings, name them one by one. Thank You, Jesus, for forgiving my sins. We used to love that song, Thank you Lord, for saving my soul; Thank you Lord, for making me whole; Thank you Lord, for giving to me, Thy great salvation so rich and free. It's so easy to have a grateful heart when you realize that your sins have been carried away and forgiven. Someone said, "The first thing we experience as Christians is the

joy of sins forgiven.” Never outgrow that.

I remember my Grandmother Miller who loved the Lord. She was such a godly woman. I thank the Lord. I wish as a young man growing up I would've valued and appreciated her more. I remember as a young boy going to spend a few days with my grandmother. She used to pray and say, “Lord, thank You for saving me.” I thought, Grandma, you've been saved for sixty years and you're still thanking Jesus for your salvation? She just always was grateful for her salvation, never outgrew that.

So, what're we thankful for? First, we've been qualified. We've been made fit for heaven, verse 12. Secondly, we've been delivered from Satan's kingdom of darkness and transferred into the Kingdom of the Son of His love, verse 13. In verse 12 we have the word 'light' or the concept of light; then, in verse 13 we have the word 'love;' and in verse 14, we have been redeemed by the death of Christ on the cross and our sins have been forgiven. Amen? Let's pray.