

The Overflow Of New Life

Colossians 3:15-17

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Let's read the text beginning in verse 15. Paul says, "And let the peace of God,"—or as some translations have Christ—"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,"—that covers everything you think and everything you do, all your words and all your actions—"do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

Years ago I heard the statement that the surest sign that you're carrying a full bucket is wet feet. I love that. If you have a full bucket, your feet are going to be wet. If your life is full of Jesus Christ, guess what? He is going to overflow from your life, so it's not a matter of just having the Lord in your life, we want the Lord to be overflowing from our lives. Amen? This is the overflowing Christian life. Someone said, "The surest sign that you are living in the fullness of the Christ is that His life is overflowing from yours."

In the context, verses 8-14, Paul had told us what to take off like soiled clothing, the old grave clothes, and then what to put on, the grace clothes. He specifically names sins that we're to put off and the graces that we are to put on. The text tonight gives us three commands by which we control the expression or the overflow of the new life. They're real clear and simple to see. The three commands are: "And let the peace of Christ rule," verse 15; the second is, "Let the word of Christ dwell," verse 16; and the third one is let the name of Christ be glorified. Those are three commands for all believers that we should be obedient to if we're going to have lives that are overflowing with Jesus Christ.

Let's look at them one at a time. First of all, verse 15, "And let the peace of God,"—or peace of Christ—"rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body,"—that's the Church, the body of Christ—"and be ye thankful." Now, I want to point out that there are four qualities about this "peace of Christ." First of all it is a divine peace, verse 15, ". . . the peace of God."

You might be a little confused. You say, "Well, which is it? Is it the peace of Christ or is it the peace of God?" The truth is whether we're talking about God the Father or God the Son, we're talking about God. Amen? The Bible teaches there is one God. Make no mistakes about it, Christianity as well as Judaism is monotheistic. There is only one God. There are not a myriad of gods or a plethora of gods, there is only one true and living God, and He's the source of all things. In Genesis 1:1, ". . . God created the heaven and the earth," but Jesus is just as much God as God the Father, and the Holy Spirit is just as much God as God the Son, Jesus Christ, or God the Father. I know that may not quite compute, but that's okay because we're finite and God is infinite. God transcends our understanding, so we can only know about God what He's revealed in His Word, and He's revealed that He is God in three Persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Also, there is a manuscript issue that more modern manuscripts actually have the word “Christ” instead of “God.” A lot of good conservative scholarship feels that a better translation, and if you have a more modern translation than my King James, it says, “. . . the peace of Christ,” not “. . . the peace of God,” but, again, either way the context focuses on Christ. The theme of the book of Colossians focuses on Christ. I don’t know which we should read, God or Christ, but I know that they are both the same—not same Person, but same in essence. They’re both divine.

For the sake of the book of Colossians, for the sake of the theme of Colossians, for the sake of clearly in verse 16, “Let the word of Christ,” and verse 17, “. . . in the name of the Lord Jesus,”—who is the Christ, so we’re going to stick with “Christ” there in verse 15. So, it’s a divine peace that comes from God, comes from Christ, comes from the Holy Spirit.

Before our conversion, we were at war with God, and the Bible says there’s no peace for the wicked. Did you know that before you were saved that you were actually, the Bible says you are at, “. . . enmity against God,” you’re fighting against God. Now, we may not have been conscious of it or aware of it, but we were rebels, we were running, we were fighting against God, and there was no peace between us and God. I want you to notice something, it’s “. . . the peace of God,” not peace with God, it’s the peace of. There’s a big difference between the two. Before our conversion we were at war with God—no peace with God. Then, the moment we were born again or converted, we were regenerated by the Holy Spirit, we have peace with God.

If you haven’t ever heard this before, it’s important for you to understand this. Peace with God happens the moment you’re born again at conversion. The peace of God happens after you’re saved and you live by faith, you’re growing in sanctification, you’re trusting God, you’re experiencing in your soul peace. So, you have peace with God, and until you have peace with God you cannot experience the peace of God. You come to that relationship of experiencing God’s peace in the midst of even trials and troubles and difficulties.

Write down Romans 5:1. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Every believer has peace with God, but not every believer has the peace of God. You can be a Christian on your way to heaven, but you’re not living and experiencing His peace. There is no peace in your soul. This is the whole continued section about the abundant life, the overflowing life, so what we want is just not to be having peace with God, that’s salvation, we want to have the peace of God, that’s sanctification, growing more and more in the likeness of Jesus Christ.

Here it’s the peace of God. Now, what is the peace of God? It’s the deep tranquility of soul which Christ imparts. D.L. Moody, Dwight Lymon Moody, the famous American evangelist, used to say that a little faith will take your soul to heaven, that’s salvation, but a lot of faith now will bring heaven to your soul. I love that. That’s the difference between peace with God and the peace of God—a little faith in a great Savior, you go to heaven. It doesn’t take a lot of faith to get saved, it just takes a little faith in Christ, the right object, but it does take more faith to believe God’s promises, to rest in His power and His providential care for me to experience in

my soul the peace of God which passes understanding.

Write down Philippians 4:7, “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through,”—or in—“Christ Jesus.” When we walk with Him, trust in Him, yield to Him, living in obedience with Him, then we experience the peace of Christ in our soul. Jesus said in John 14:27, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.” Jesus actually gives us His peace.

Notice also, it's not just a divine peace, it's a ruling peace. Look at the text, verse 15. It says, “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts.” That word “rule” is the key. It's an athletic term which means to act as umpire. It literally was used for an umpire in a contest that would make the deciding decision. It also had the idea of setting rules or boundaries which would govern other people's actions. The peace of Christ is to actually control us. This is where it comes into play about knowing God's will for your life, experiencing the subjective—yes, the emotional—experience of God's peace in your heart knowing that God is guiding and leading you. So, it's the peace of Christ which actually rules, controls, decides as an umpire. It means God's peace should arbitrate all our activities and our decisions.

In sporting events we have instant replay. You watch the NFL, and they throw in the flag and replay it while everyone's sitting in the grandstands with hushed breath waiting for the umpire, the referee, to make the decision. He calls the decision and the team that didn't get the decision their way groans and moans; the other team cheers and celebrates. Once the decision is made, no more disputing, right? You might not like it, but the decision is made.

God's peace in your heart helps you to make decisions. It helps you to know God's will and God's purpose and God's plan for your life. When it comes to knowing God's will, it's a vast subject I cannot exhaust as a point in my sermon here, but let me give you three principles. First, the peace of God in your heart ruling, the Word of God instructing, and the hand of God guiding. How do I know God's will for my life? God's peace. If I don't have a peace, I need to pause. I need to pray. I need to ask God for peace. Again, this is difficult because it's subjective and people can actually impose their own feelings on their situation. Many times they feel like they're having God's peace, but it's not really God's peace, it's just their will being asserted for God's will.

That's why the second point is God's Word. God's peace will never violate God's Word. If you're saying, “Well, I have a peace about robbing the bank right now,” no, you don't. “I have a peace about divorcing my wife right now,” no, you don't. If God's Word is clear, He's never going to give you a “peace” to do something that's not biblical or scriptural. God is never going to violate His Word. So, you have to see all three of these things line up to know that you can be safely in the will of God. So, I have His peace; I open the Bible, I have His promise in His Word, He speaks to me and I know it's clearly the Lord speaking through His Word or declaring in His Word His will; and then third is the providence of God or I've said the hand of God. So, the peace of God, the Word of God, and the hand of God.

What do I mean by that? This is something I've seen so clearly in my walk with the Lord in that God will lead you and guide you providentially. He'll open doors, He'll shut doors. You want the door open, He shuts it; you want the door shut, He opens it. The stops and the starts are ordained by God. God places you where you're supposed to be. Your part is simply to just trust and obey.

We sing, Trust and obey, for there's no other way, To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey. That's so true. Just to say, "Lord, I love You. I want to live for You. I'm going to align my life with Your Word. I want to be filled with Your Spirit. God, You open doors. You guide me. You direct me. I'll step through those doors. You shut doors, You lead me." God providentially just leads our lives, and He's in control of the circumstances of our lives. We have those three things that line up—God's will, God's peace, and God's Word. Now, be careful not to have a false peace, which I know is a challenge because it's hard to discern, that's why you must, again, have the Word of God and the providential hand of God in your situation.

Notice it's not only a divine peace and a ruling peace, but, verse 15, it's also a peace of unity. I love this. Notice verse 15, " . . . to the which also ye are called in one body;" the word "body" is a reference to the Church and whether or not it's focusing on the universal Church, the whole body of Christ, or the local church, the body of Christ in Colossae, it doesn't really matter. The Church comes in those two categories. Everyone that is born again anywhere in the world is part of the Church universally. At this church, this is a local fellowship of believers is a body of Christ at which He is the head and we're brothers and sisters all knit together. It's also a family. It's also a building. It's also a bride. It's also a flock—we're sheep, He's our Shepherd. Those are all images in the Bible about the Church.

By the way, it's so important for you as a believer to be a part of, connected to, and involved in a local fellowship. I've had people say, "Well, I don't have to go to church to be a good Christian." You cannot be a solid, strong, growing Christian without the church. It is a divine institution. I know it's got its problems, I know it's got some issues. No church is perfect, why? Because it's made up of people who are imperfect, but we all need to love each other, pray for each other, serve each other, and seek to encourage and build up one another.

I love this in the context that we have God's peace ruling in our hearts, " . . . we're called to one body; and be ye thankful." So, it's a ruling peace, a peace of unity—peace with God, peace with others in the church, peace in our marriage, peace in our family, and peace on the job, peace in the workplace. It all starts with your vertical relationship with peace with God, then the peace of God, then it affects your relationship with others. Until you're right with God, it's pretty hard to be right with others.

The very next verse, verses 18-20, and look at the peace of Christ ruling in the Christian home. Verse 18, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands . . . Husbands, love your wives . . . Children, obey your parents." This peace can rule in your marriage and rule in your home and in your family as well. A position of peace before God brings a practice of peace within the church. Peace and unity go together. Ephesians 2 says Christ made, " . . . in himself of twain,"—

or two—"one new man, so making peace." But, verse 15 is basically saying that God's peace should constantly regulate all our activities as believers. It's in the present active imperative—ongoing, continual, habitual peace guiding and leading and directing us.

Notice it's also a peace of thanksgiving, verse 15. ". . . ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful." There's our Thanksgiving verse, ". . . ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful." Again, this is an imperative. It's a command. The Bible is commanding us as believers to be thankful. Literally it's, "and thankful continually become." You know, we don't thank because we don't think. We don't think about God's goodness, God's mercy, God's grace, God's love, and God's blessings. If you're like me, sometimes you get in a funk and start looking at all the negatives. Instead of counting your blessings, you're counting your bummers—name them one by one, count all your bummers, what God has not done—and you forget about all the rich blessings and all the good things that God has done. When we sink, then we begin to thank, and the Spirit-filled believer, the one who is overflowing with Christ, has a thankful heart.

In Ephesians is the parallel to this where Paul talks about being filled with the Spirit and that we have a joyful heart, a thankful heart, "Giving thanks . . . one to another in the fear of God." So, ". . . be ye thankful." Learn to be thankful. God's grace in salvation brings me peace with God, peace of God, which in turn brings a thankful heart.

Write down 1 Thessalonians 5:18. "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." God's will for you and me is that we be thankful. Now, notice in everything, not for everything. There are things that we can't be thankful for, but we're thankful that God is in control. Someone said, "A thankful person acknowledges the working of the sovereign will of God in their life and circumstances." See God's hand in every facet of your life. Is your life overflowing with thanksgiving?

Let's move to the second one that governs the overflowing life, verse 16, that is, "Let the word of Christ dwell," so the peace of Christ ruling and the Word of Christ dwelling. Look at verse 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." What does Paul mean by "the word of Christ"? First, it would be the Word which Christ spoke as recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the four gospels. We're studying the gospel of Luke on Sunday morning, and we just finished the sermon on the plain, the Sermon on the Mount, so let those words of Christ, and in many Bibles they're in red, dwell in you richly.

It also is a term which would be used for all of Scripture. I believe it's a synonym for Scripture. When Paul says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly," it's another way of saying, "Let the Bible, let the Scriptures, let the Word of God fill your heart and fill your life." In just a moment I'll go back to this, but to be a Spirit-filled believer you must be filled with the Word of God. You cannot neglect God's Word and be a Spirit-filled believer. The two are united together. I call them the dynamic duo in the life of every believer—the Spirit of God using the Word of God. It's so very, very important. The Scriptures are to dwell in you mightily. It's the Word of the Lord.

Now, God's Word is to dwell in us. The word "dwell" is a key phrase. It means to settle down and be at home. It's more than just reading the Word, it's letting the Word have access to every part of your life. It's letting your heart become Christ's home. Some modern paraphrase versions of the Bible actually say, "Let the Word of Christ make itself at home in your heart."

Have you ever had a friend come over and you say, "Make yourself at home." I'm not sure we really, really mean that, by the way. You don't want to say that to me because I take my shoes off and I throw my socks and I go into the refrigerator and drink out of the milk carton. Pray for me. You don't want me to make myself at home. What we really mean is just sit there and don't do anything, right? when a guest comes over. Or, when you say, "Quick!" when you hear the door knock you say, "Pick up all the clutter and put it into the back bedroom and shut the door or the closet. Don't let them go down the hall and open that door."

What this is saying is Christ's Word is to come in our hearts and make itself at home in our hearts. Every room, every cupboard, every closet, every drawer, every facet of our lives, Christ's Word is to have complete rule. There should never be an area of your life that you don't let Jesus into. "Lord, it's okay for You to sit right here in the living room, but I don't want You in the bedroom. I don't want You in the den. You just stay here." No, let Christ's Word have its way in every aspect of your life and in your heart. It's the Word of God dwelling in us. It's more than just, as I said, reading the Word, it's the Word having access to every part of your life. It's letting your heart become Christ's home.

God's Word should dwell in us how? Richly. Look at verse 16, ". . . in all wisdom." It means the Word must be highly prized and appreciated. It must be read, it must be believed, it must be obeyed, it must be internalized, it must be held to and clung to tightly. In the Psalms it says it's more precious than gold, and we should delight in God's Word. We should meditate on God's Word. Too many Christians suffer and don't experience the abundant, overflowing life because they neglect the Bible. They don't feed on the Word. They don't become serious Bible students and also pray and surrender in obedience to put into practice the things they learn in God's Word. It's so very, very important. It must be read, believed, and applied to transform our lives, our home, our church.

When the Word of Christ dwells in us richly, what happens? Here are the results in the text. There's ". . . teaching and admonishing." Teaching is the positive instruction of truth. If you want to know truth, you find it in the Bible. Amen? God's Word is true. Admonishing, verse 16, means it's a warning and a correcting. The Bible tells us what is right, the Bible tells us what is wrong. Notice 2 Timothy 3:16, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." I've said this before, but I'll say it again, doctrine is what is right, reproof is what is wrong, correction is how to get right, and instruction in righteousness is how to stay right. We need the Bible in our lives if we're going to have overflowing lives.

Notice again, verse 16, ". . . one another." Paul says there that we are, ". . . admonishing one another." This is one of the "one anothers" in the Bible—love one another, pray for one another,

serve one another, forgive one another. You can't have a "one another" if there are no others, that's why you're supposed to be part of the church, part of a fellowship, part of a family of God.

How do we teach and admonish one another? Here it is in the text, " . . . in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." Psalms is Old Testament psalter, it's God's playlist. Did you know the book of Psalms is God's playlist? When you read Psalms, it's not just poetry, they're songs. They were actually put to music and intended to be sung. Christianity is a singing religion. Then, " . . . and hymns." Songs of praise to the glory of God found many times in the New Testament. First Timothy 1:15 is an example. When Paul says, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." New Testament scholars believe, and I think it's true, that this was actually an early hymn that the early church sang. They sang 1 Timothy 1:15. There's all kinds of examples of them singing not only in the Old Testament but in the New Testament as well.

We also use, " . . . spiritual songs," and not just songs, spiritual songs—all other songs that are spiritual and that edify the believer and glorify God. From time to time I'm asked, "Is it okay for a Christian to listen to secular music?" I guess you can if you want to, but why would you? I'm not trying to rain on your parade or tell you you can't listen to your favorite song, but why wouldn't you listen to music that instructed you, admonished you, built you up in the faith, taught you about God, drew you closer to the Lord? Why wouldn't you want music that is spiritual rather than secular, talking about things that are not edifying or glorifying to God? Again, I'm not a legalist. If you want to listen to some secular songs, have fun. But I think that if you want to have an overflowing life, you need to listen to praise and worship, psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, " . . . singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."

When we worship here at the church, people can come and learn about God through the worship. They can sense God's presence in the worship. They can come under conviction as we worship. Did you ever think about when you come to church if you just kind of sit there like a wooden Indian, a bump on the log? One preacher once said, "Christians go to a sporting event on the weekend and scream and yell like wild Indians. Then, they go to church on Sunday and sit like wooden Indians." Why wouldn't we want to be expressive and lift our voices and sing to the Lord? Now, it doesn't say we have to sing well. The Bible says, "Make a joyful noise," praise God for that because for some of us all we can do is make a noise. The Lord sees our hearts, but I believe that our songs should be biblical and in line with Scripture. We don't have any more right to sing a song that's unbiblical than we do to preach a message that's unbiblical, and our songs should be edifying and glorifying to God and be instructive.

Charles Erdman said this, "Songs were used widely in many forms of poetry not only sacred but secular as well; therefore, the word spiritual is added to denote the religious character of these songs." Saint Augustine insisted that there were three essentials for a hymn: 1) It must be praise; 2) it must be addressed to God; 3) it must be sung.

Now, I like songs that are celebratory and declaratory, they're declaring God, but I love songs that are prayers to God. I love it when the church sings songs that are prayers to God. This is

why our hearts and minds should be engaged. I love the hymn, Have Thine own way Lord, Have Thine own way, Thou art the potter I am the clay, Mold me and make me after Thy will, While I am waiting yielded and still. What a great song; and if you sing that and you mean that, you can be transformed by meaning that as a prayer. If you just mouth the words and you're singing but your heart's far from God, it doesn't do any good. But if you engage your heart and your mind... This is why Jesus told the woman at the well in John 4 that the true worshipers worship in spirit and in truth.

Notice in verse 16, they were, “. . . singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord,” so we have an audience of One when we worship God. Again, the indication of an overflowing life is a song in your heart. One of the greatest ways to discover whether or not you're walking in the Spirit or not, is there a song in your heart? Is there a song in your heart. When there's a song in your heart, it's a great indication that the King is in residence there. You're singing to the Lord. Jesus puts the song in our hearts, and we sing joyfully to Him.

The history of revivals in the church are all tied together with not only people coming to know Christ but with songs of worship and praise. The Protestant Reformation under Martin Luther brought a whole new singing to the church. The Wesleyan Revival, John and Charles Wesley, brought new songs and hymns to the church. D.L. Moody and the revivals with him and his worship leader, Sankey, brought songs to the church. In the 60s and the 70s, I experienced it myself and many of you did, too, when we had the Jesus Revolution or the Jesus Movement brought songs to the church. Many of the contemporary worship choruses that we sing today were birthed in the 70s and in the 60s as to contemporary music. Prior to that, there was just a piano and an organ and hymns. This revival brought new songs and expressions of praise and worship to the Lord.

Notice, we do it, “. . . with grace in your hearts,” which actually means graciousness in our hearts because of God's grace. So, it's with gratitude and thankfulness for God's grace, and we're singing to the audience of One, the Lord.

Just by way of reference, write it down. You can flip there real quick if you want to, Ephesians 5. I want to point out something. Ephesians and Colossians were written at the same time by Paul in prison in Rome, so there's a lot of parallels. Ephesians focuses on the body of Christ; Colossians focuses on the head of the body, Christ. Notice this parallel between Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:18-21. “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess,”—or debauchery, that's a command not to be drunk—“but be filled with the Spirit; 19 Speaking to one another,”—here's the ‘one anothers’, here's the body concept—“in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” It's almost exactly like the passage we just read in Colossians. Verse 20, “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; 21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear,”—or reverence—“of God.” The cool parallel there, a tie-in there, is that the same results of, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,” are the same results of the Holy Spirit filling you.

When I grew up in church, I was never taught that. I was never taught that it was necessary to

have the Bible ruling in your heart and life to be a Spirit-filled Christian. I was always taught that if you had gifts of the Spirit, you were Spirit-filled. Do you know that you can—listen to me—have gifts and not be spiritual, but you can't have fruit. Fruit of the Spirit is the evidence of the filling of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, gentleness, meekness, self-control. You can have all the gifts of the Spirit like the Corinthians and be very carnal, but if you have the fruit of the Spirit, it's an indication of spirituality and it's synonymous to be Spirit-filled is to be Word filled. You cannot separate the two. If you try to do that, you'll blow up or dry up. You need the Word of God and the Spirit of God to grow up, a balance of both. Amen? I call them the dynamic duo.

There's one last point, and I won't tarry, verse 17. What does it say? It says, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed," by the way that word "whatsoever" means whatsoever. Anything you do, whether it's your words or your deeds, your words and your actions, "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." When we let the peace of Christ rule and the Word of Christ dwell, then our lives will bring glory to God and Christ.

What does Paul mean by, ". . . the name of the Lord Jesus"? He means His person and His character. So, let the name of Christ, let the person of Christ, rule, control you, and lead and guide you.

There are three features involved in this command. Again, I won't tarry on them, but look at this. Verse 17, the first one is the scope of the command, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed," so everything you say and everything you do. What that means is all of life. All of life is to be controlled by Christ.

Secondly, all of life should be lived under the authority of Christ and for His glory. Notice verse 17, ". . . do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Nothing should be permitted into our lives that cannot be associated with Jesus Christ. If you look at Colossians 3:4, he uses an expression, "Christ, who is our life," every facet of our lives. It means that you should never go anywhere, do anything, say anything, think anything that is not consistent with Jesus Christ.

If you're going to go to the theater and watch a movie, you don't say, "Jesus, You stay home because I don't think You'll like this movie. I don't think You would approve of this movie, so if You just sit here, I'll be back in a couple of hours and we'll resume where we left off." No, no, no, no, no. If Jesus can't go in the theater with you and watch the movie, you're not to be watching that movie. If Jesus isn't hanging out with you with your friends, you shouldn't be hanging out there with your friends. If you're dating an unbeliever, which is contrary to the Word of God, "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers," you're not taking Jesus with you into that relationship, you're making a big mistake. Christ should go with you to work, in your marriage, in school. Every facet, every aspect of your life, you take Jesus with you, and you live every facet of your life under His rule and under His authority. Amen?

All that we do should be done with thanksgiving, too. Again, he comes back to that in closing, verse 17, ". . . giving thanks to God and the Father by him." Now, there's a little challenge in translating that last phrase, ". . . God and the Father." It actually is trying to indicate the idea

that God is our Father, and because He is our Father, we should be giving thanks. So, we're giving thanks to God who is our Father, and because He is our Father, we should be thankful that we have a Father in heaven that loves us, cares for us, and watches over us, " . . . giving thanks to God and the Father by him," is literally, become thankful because God is your Father.

In Matthew 6 Jesus said why would you worry? You have a Father in heaven who cares for you more than the sparrows. One sparrow falls to the ground, God takes notice of it. You are of more value than many sparrows. Flowers, just beautifully clothed in the fields, which today are, tomorrow wither and dry and are used for fuel in the oven. If He so clothes the flowers of the field, shall He not clothe you, O ye of little faith? If He feeds birds, He'll feed you because He's your Father. He's their Creator, and He's also your Creator, but He is your Father, and you are His child.

There are three things that can control our lives: " . . . the peace of Christ," ruling; " . . . the word of Christ," dwelling; and " . . . in the name of Christ," glorified. Let's pray.