

BEING AND BECOMING THANKFUL

WHAT IT MEANS TO LET THE PEACE OF CHRIST RULE IN OUR HEARTS ...



THE COSMIC SIGNIFICANCE OF TRUE THANKFULNESS

OUR DIRECTION THIS MORNING—"AND BE THANKFUL" ...

- (Colossians 3:15 ESV) And **let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts**, to which indeed you were called in one body. **And be thankful.**

A. We are called as the body of Christ to let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts.

B. We are commanded to be and become thankful.

Paul probably does not have in mind a cheery disposition or positive thinking **but a steadfast orientation to God in confidence that God rules supreme through the death, resurrection, and exaltation of the Son and that history is headed for that cosmic, reconciled lordship—and to live inside this vision enables one to be thankful.** [McKnight, S. (2018). *The Letter to the Colossians* (N. B. Stonehouse, F. F. Bruce, G. D. Fee, & J. B. Green, Eds.; p. 328). William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.]

1. The starting point for being and becoming thankful is new life with Christ in God, 3:1-4.

- (Colossians 3:1-4 ESV) **If then you have been raised with Christ**, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For **you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God**. 4 When **Christ who is your life** appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

A. The first step in becoming thankful is resurrected life in Jesus Christ.

B. If we have been raised with Christ, then we have died with Christ, and now Christ is our life.

- (Romans 6:8 ESV) **Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.**

C. We now make our life decisions based on our new relationship with Christ.

D. We make decisions in harmony with our new life by setting our minds on things above.

E. When we seek the things above, we turn away from the things on earth.

F. We now base our actions on the reality that we died with Christ and Christ is now our life.

- (Romans 6:3-4 ESV) Do you not know that **all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death**? 4 **We were**

buried therefore with him by baptism into death, **in order that**, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, **we too might walk in newness of life.**

2. We become thankful by a conscious, disciplined effort to stop living the way we used to live—to put off our earthly ways, 3:5-9.

- (Colossians 3:5-9 ESV) **Put to death therefore what is earthly in you**: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming. 7 **In these you too once walked, when you were living in them**. 8 **But now you must put them all away**: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, **seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices.**

A. We put to death what is earthly in us.

B. We do this when we consciously determine to walk by the Spirit.

- (Galatians 5:16-17 ESV) **But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh**. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and **the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh**, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

C. When we walk by the Spirit, we are aided in putting away our earthly ways as the Spirit who indwells us actively opposes the earthly cravings in our lives.

3. We become thankful by a conscious, disciplined effort to live in a manner consistent with our new identity in Christ, 3:10-14.

- (Colossians 3:10-14 ESV) **And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator**. 11 Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. **Put on then**, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, **forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you**, so you also must forgive. 14 **And above all these put on love**, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

A. We are commanded to live differently than we did before—to put on our new self.

B. When we walk by the Spirit, the Spirit who now indwells us produces the fruit of the new life in us.

- (Galatians 5:22–24 ESV) **But the fruit of the Spirit is** love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

4. We are thankful followers of Christ when the peace of Christ rules in our hearts, 3:15.

- (Colossians 3:15 ESV) **And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts**, to which indeed you were called in one body. **And be thankful.**

Peace ... *εἰρήνη* [i-ray-nay/] ... the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God; a state of freedom from disturbance, worry or annoyance; freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions; the absence of mental stress or anxiety.

A. Christ gave us his peace so that our hearts would be neither troubled nor afraid.

- (John 14:27 ESV) Peace I leave with you; **my peace I give to you**. Not as the world gives do I give to you. **Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.**

B. Christ speaks words of peace to us so that we will have peace in him and so overcome our troubles in this world.

- (John 16:33 ESV) **I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace**. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.

C. God promises his peace to guard our hearts and minds from anxiety in Christ Jesus.

- (Philippians 4:6–7 ESV) **Do not be anxious about anything**, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 **And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

SO WHAT IS THE UNTHANKFUL, FEARFUL, ANXIOUS, TROUBLED PERSON MISSING — THE PEACE OF CHRIST RULING IN HIS HEART ... THE PEACE OF CHRIST IS NOT THE DECISIVE, DETERMINING FACTOR IN HIS LIFE ...

D. The peace of Christ only accomplishes this state of thankfulness when it rules in our hearts.

Rule ... *βραβεύω* [brabeuo] – to factor decisively; to be the factor determining an outcome; to direct, control.

E. When the peace of Christ rules in our hearts, we have thankfulness of cosmic proportions because we know that we have peace with God.

- (Romans 5:1 ESV) Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, **we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

F. By his saving act on the cross the Son of God made a sure way of reconciliation for sinful humans.

- (Romans 8:1 ESV) **There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.**

***The means through which the rule of Christ's peace can be realized is "the blood of his cross" (1:20). An act [Christ's death on the cross] that appears to reveal the utter impotence [think weakness and helplessness] of the subject becomes the most powerful creative act through which creation is reconciled with its Creator (cf. 1:20). For Paul, therefore, the evocation of this "peace" again reminds the readers of both the means through which God's salvation is accomplished and the cosmic effect of such an accomplishment. To incorporate this "peace" in one's life is to behave with the realization of the reality of this divine accomplishment. [Pao, D. W. (2012). *Colossians and Philemon* (p. 246). Zondervan.] **END QUOTE**

Cosmic ... speaks of the universe or cosmos; relating to the extraterrestrial vastness in contrast to the earth alone.

Cosmos ... speaks of the universe as a well-ordered whole; a complete, orderly, harmonious system.

G. God created the cosmos—the orderly, harmonious system comprising the heavens and the earth.

- (Genesis 1:1 ESV) **In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.**
- (Genesis 1:31a ESV) And God saw everything that he had made, **and behold, it was very good.**
- (Genesis 2:1 ESV) **Thus the heavens and the earth were finished**, and all the host of them.

H. But Adam and Eve rebelled and God's very good created order was soon cursed and under the judgment of the Creator.

I. Now the very heavens and earth that God had declared good are being kept until the day of judgment.

- (2 Peter 3:7 ESV) But by the same word **the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.**

J. Now that we understand the cosmic proportions of our reconciliation, we should overflow with thankfulness.

- (2 Corinthians 5:18–21 ESV) **All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;** 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, **and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.** 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 **For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**
- (Colossians 1:19–23 ESV) For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 **and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.** 21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 **he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death,** in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, **not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven,** and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

5. We are thankful followers of Christ when the word of Christ dwells in us so richly that we teach and admonish one another, 3:16-17.

- (Colossians 3:16–17 ESV) **Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing** one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with **thankfulness** in your hearts to God. 17 **And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.**

A. The word of Christ richly dwelling in us is causative as it actively transforms our lives and prompts us to certain actions.

B. The word of Christ dwelling in us richly causes us to teach and admonish one another in wisdom and with thankfulness.

C. The word of Christ dwelling in us richly causes us to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus while giving thanks to God the Father.