

98-07-24a Colossians

As we prepare to study the Word of God together this evening, let's begin by asking God's blessing upon us. Father, we thank you for the wonderful ways that you have demonstrated your grace toward us, not only in saving us and entering us into eternal relationship with yourself, but in the daily grace that you bestow on us, preserving us, protecting us, guiding us and giving us blessing and opportunity in so many ways and in so many areas of life. We pray tonight as we spend time together pursuing an understanding of the truth of your Word that God the Holy Spirit will enable us and enlighten us.

We pray that our investigation and our meditation of your Word will bear fruit in our souls and accomplish the purpose for which you have placed it in our hands. We know that you have said that your Word is like bread that goes forth and does not return void, and we pray that that will be true as we study your Word tonight. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. We resume tonight our study in Colossians chapter 1. We have seen Paul's greeting. We have seen his commendation of the believers in Colossae in terms of their faith, their hope and their love.

The good report that he has received from their pastor Epaphras. And most recently we have seen Paul's description of the kind of prayer that he prays for these believers on a regular basis. He says, every time I pray for you, this is what I pray.

I do not cease to give thanks. I do not cease to pray that you may be filled with the knowledge, with the epignosis, the over and above, the penetrating, grasping knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. In verse 11, strengthened with all might according to His glorious power, with a view toward all patience, all longsuffering, with joy.

Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

And really in verse 15, a new section begins. And some of your Bibles may have sort of a section break between verse 14 and verse 15. The New King James before me does not.

But there is a shift here between what Paul has been describing relative to believers who are sustained and enabled by the knowledge of God's will, the knowledge of God's word. Now he is going to address the Lord Jesus Christ directly. He is going to address His person, His standing in the universe, His place in our thinking.

We think, well, no one is going to argue whenever anyone starts talking about Jesus Christ. I mean, it's a wonderful subject. All of us recognize that He is our Savior and no one will ever quibble.

And I believe that this is the reason that some of the scriptures that have suffered a little bit of modification over the years, when we go back to reconstruct it, we can see that if something is said about Jesus Christ, for example, in this passage in verse 14, it says, "...in whom we have redemption through His blood." You may have a note there that says, "...through His blood." That phrase is not found in all of the manuscripts. A lot of the earlier manuscripts don't have that phrase. But early on, and this can happen even in innocent ways, someone could have had a very fine copy of Paul's letter to the Colossians and studied it, and just like we do in the margins of our Bible, made notes, had been reading other scriptures, and made a little marginal note.

Well, where did this redemption come from? Well, it came through His blood. And maybe looking at a copy of some of John's writing, or be just meditating and thinking about it and seeing connections in the scripture and made a little note there in the margin. Well, He dies at a full ripe old age and His heirs or someone else in the monastery or someplace, the scriptorium, gets a hold of the manuscript.

They don't know that that's a marginal note. So when they're copying the scripture, they think, well, this was an omission from when this copy was made earlier, and it needs to be inserted at that place. So they just write it right in.

And as copies multiply and copies multiply, pretty soon there are dozens of manuscripts that have incorporated what started out as a marginal note. Is the note inspired? Did God intend for the note to be covenant? I mean, there's lots of issues that you can get into in terms of the transmission history of the scriptures. As I have mentioned many times in the past, I believe that the manuscript of the Word of God, both the Old Testament and the New Testament books, has suffered errors in transmission.

There are corruptions, there are omissions, there are changes that have been made down through the years, and even the best manuscripts that we have are not perfect copies of the original. And we think, well, what does that do to my doctrine of inspiration and my confidence in the scripture? What if what I'm trusting in is actually a copyist error or a mistake or just somebody's happy thought that they put in the margin? It is my belief and has been my experience thus far that any time there's a question as to the integrity of the text before us, if the text itself is inconclusive, we're not sure which way it should be from internal evidence, there is enough other evidence around to determine what it should be. In other words, where God has not preserved for us the actual original wording, there is enough evidence to reconstruct the original wording, so that in a sense, you have not only the text, but also evidence that surrounds the text, and the combination of those two things helps us to recover the original thought.

It has been often observed, and it is also true in my observation and experience, that there is no doctrine of the Word of God that hinges on a troubled text. There isn't anything that we would have to change should it come out that, oh, well, this phrase wasn't really in the thing to begin with. Our faith rests solidly on very widely acknowledged, accurate texts.

But I will tell you that in places we have this. And so when we come to passages that deal with Jesus Christ, if there's any sort of a change, if it mentions His blood, well, who's going to go in and say, you know, I really think that's a marginal note, I believe I'll just line that out. I mean, who's going to line out the blood of Christ in their Bible? So this is how these things can sort of accumulate.

And, of course, one of the most famous examples to me is the passage, For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. I think you've probably heard me talk about that particular passage before, where the original Philippians 1.21, Paul is comparing whether it's better to stay and minister or to go and be with the Lord. And he's saying to live and remain with you and help you along with your spiritual growth is good and fruitful, but to go be with the Lord would be even better.

And to say that something is good, one of the ways you can say it in Greek is to use the word chrestos, which is c-h-r-e-s-t-o-s. And that e looks, if you could imagine a small n in English, and if you just took that last little tail of the n and dropped it down below the line, it looks like an n with a long tail at the, you know, after you make your straight line, you go up and make the hump and come down to the line, just extend that below the line. That's an eta in Greek.

The difference between chrestos, which is Christ's, the Lord Jesus' title, has an iota there, which is just a line. So the difference between an eta and an iota is the difference between chrestos and krestos. If someone is copying as one person reads the text, and this used to take place, someone would read and there would be several copyists writing so that you could get four or five copies from one original.

Someone could have been going along and the similar sound of the words, it would be easy for someone to put in Christ instead of chrest, which means good in Greek, chrestos. So when Paul says, for me, to live is good and to die is gain, very early, very early, because we don't have any textual evidence to support the hypothesis I'm putting before you, but I think very early on this error was made and so now we have the verse, to live is Christ, which has been kind of difficult, because whether you take it in Greek or English, it doesn't really make sense. And people say, oh, it's an inspired thing, it's on plaques, and I don't want to hurt anybody's feelings if that's your life verse or your favorite verse or whatever.

The truth that you see in that statement is certainly valid, but if you look at it in context, you've got several parallel statements. Paul goes back and forth, back and forth. To stay and be with you might be needful, but to go and be with the Lord would be desirable.

To stay here is good, to be with the Lord is better. To say, for me to live is Christ, if he was in a philosophical, abstract sort of a mode, that would make sense. But in that context of Philippians 1, it's difficult.

The reason I'm sort of belaboring this point is that we can sort of zone out, if you will, when it comes to scriptures about Christ. We tend to put Christ up on a pedestal, and when we get to sections like we're about to address in Colossians, it's difficult for us to bring it down and have it be something that is real and life-changing. And we don't want to acknowledge that.

We say, well, anything that's talking about Christ, I mean, it's wonderful and we love the Lord Jesus and everything else, but you stop and think about it. If you're talking about these statements, all things were created by him that are in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, thrones, dominions. All things were created through him and for him.

He's before all things, in him all things consist. He's the image of the invisible God and so forth. And you think, well, of course.

He's Christ, he's God, he's these things. But as you fold your Bible shut and go on about your business, you say, well, I appreciate that and that's wonderful and I love the Lord Jesus, but it doesn't seem like there's anything really applicable or practical about that. I mean, that's him.

I'm not the image of the invisible God. I'm not holding together all things and I didn't create the universe. And in some ways, these passages that praise the Lord Jesus in his magnificence and in his deity and in all of his over-and-above-ness distance him from us and we see how different he is than us.

And we appreciate him for all of those things that he is, but it is sometimes difficult for us to find a meaning that propels us forward in our life based on that. We pretty much just go into the appreciation mode and then we're done. Well, my hope is, as we go through this section of Colossians chapter 1, to change that perception because Paul's intention here is not to awe us with Jesus Christ.

It is an awesome passage and he is an awesome person, but Paul's intention is not to overcome us with the magnitude and glory of Christ. His intention, as you can imagine from what we've seen so far in the chapter, is to encourage us because of our relationship with God through Christ, because of our relationship with God in Christ, it ought to mean something to us. It ought to make a difference.

This sort of grandiose, glorifying passage about Christ ought to make a difference, just like the rest of Scripture. It ought to be something that we can grab hold of and see a meaning and a purpose in for us. So watch for that as we go through this and we'll all have to work on not just sort of, you know how the prophets used to do when there would be a vision of God or they'd be in the presence of the angel or whatever, they'd just fall on their face in the dust and, you know,

He is worthy and I am not.

And that's kind of as far as you get with it. We want to move one step beyond that as we look at this. So again, what is it that leads up to this section about Jesus Christ? We know that it's going to tell us and review for us many things about Christ, but why does Paul suddenly launch into this Christophany in his first chapter here? Well, what have we just seen in the previous section? It's what God has done for us in Christ.

You look at verse 13. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love. This is where the subject of the Lord Jesus Christ is introduced.

He's been talking about praying for them and all the things that are going to happen through the knowledge of God's will, how they can walk the worthy walk, how we can walk the worthy walk and be strengthened and be patient in longsuffering, have genuine joy and be strengthened according to the standard of God's own strength and be thanking God because He has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance. We mentioned this at some length last time, but if you stop and think about that, it's important to see the wording in verse 12. He has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance.

Not to discourage us or make us fainthearted or anything, but in a way this is like the thing you get in the mail from Publishers Clearinghouse. Ed McMahon and Dick Clark are on the front. You're in the hat to win the big multi-million dollar sweepstakes.

You're qualified. Here's your official documents. You're qualified for the final drawing.

Qualification is a wonderful thing, but qualifying doesn't make it happen. I've told you before and probably lots of examples of this exist, but it struck me when I was a plebe at the Naval Academy and I was still in shock at the transition that was taking place. They sat us in an auditorium and it was one of the first cool things that we had done because we were actually indoors in air conditioning.

Someone got up and was basically saying, congratulations, you're here. Stand by for a long year and so forth. One of the things that he said is, he said, I hope you appreciate and make the most of this opportunity because for every one of you sitting in the seats in this auditorium, there were I think 1,435 of us who started back in 1975 on July 7th, 1,435 of us sitting there, and he said for each one of you sitting in these seats, there were 12 qualified applicants.

There were 12 other people who could have come. They were qualified, but they weren't sitting in the seats. What happened? If they're qualified, why aren't they there? Well, there's some other criteria beyond qualification before you actually lay hold of that thing.

Many people can qualify. You can qualify for food stamps. You can qualify for a prize.

You can qualify for a race. You can qualify for a lot of things, but qualifying to participate in a race

doesn't mean that you've won the race and gotten a first, second, or third prize. It just means you're allowed to enter.

You're in the running. There's nothing inhibiting you from that opportunity. You have not been barred from the opportunity.

And we need to remember that language when we look at verse 12 when it says that God has qualified us to be partakers. That doesn't mean... He doesn't say He has made you partakers, does it? He says He has qualified you to be partakers. And we know from the other passages we've studied about inheritance that it requires a few more things.

Look, for example, at 1 Corinthians 9, in verse 23, Paul talking about his service to all men and so forth. He says in verse 22, To the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

This is another one of those cases where we find the *sozo* word group meaning more than just salvation from the lake of fire. Paul can't save anyone, can he? But he can deliver them. He can be a bearer of good news.

He can deliver believers from a fruitless life and an empty inheritance. So he becomes all things to all, that he might by all means deliver some. Look at verse 23.

Now this I do for the gospel's sake, in order that I may be partaker of it with you. You think, well my goodness, this is Paul, he's an apostle. If anybody's going to partake of anything, he should have it guaranteed.

But he says, I am doing this. I am becoming all things to all men. I am operating in humility.

I am, in verse 19, though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all. You can just take 19 and stick it right above 23. I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more.

This I do for the gospel's sake, in order that I may be partaker of it. Paul understands that even though he's qualified for an inheritance, it is the execution of the plan of God. It is understanding the will of God.

All these things that he's mentioned in his prayer for the Colossians, growing in the knowledge of God's will, being strengthened with all might, and walking the worthy walk, this is what lays hold of the inheritance. We talked about that epinosis knowledge as something that gets in and lays hold of its object. And in the spiritual sense, we lay hold of our salvation.

We lay hold of our inheritance for which God has qualified us in this way. There are many other passages that we could look at, but we have studied quite a bit about the inheritance as we went through Romans not long ago. One other passage I might mention in this regard is Ephesians 3, verse 6. Paul is talking about, again, his ministry, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles,

the mystery that Paul is a steward of and has knowledge of.

He had not made it known in other ages in Ephesians 3, 5, the way that it has now been revealed by the Holy Spirit to his apostles and prophets. Paul is one of the apostles to whom this revelation of God's unfolding plan has been made. And he says, this is the content of it, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs of the same body, partakers of his promise in Christ through the gospel.

This is what Paul became a minister of, according to the gift of the grace of God, given to Paul by the effective working of God's power. This is the opportunity that has been opened up to the Gentiles. This is why Paul makes himself a servant to all, to make them aware of that opportunity and to encourage and exhort them to avail themselves of it.

And that's what he's doing in Colossians, and that's what we're studying. So that's the context. We're leading up again to this great passage about Jesus Christ.

Why is Paul going to launch into this? Because this is going to be fuel for our fire. This is going to be part of the knowledge of God's will. It's going to help us be partakers.

So it's important. It's not just let's stand back in glory. You know, we've got a lot of Christian music and a lot of Christian worship today that just says, let's all stand back in just glory in the Lord.

Let's just be talking about his greatness and let's just kind of build up and surf down a wave of emotion about the greatness of God. This is one of many things that fall into this category. I would never suggest to take anything away from appreciation of God.

But appreciation of God has a purpose. It isn't just an end in itself. We don't just appreciate God.

Some creeds and some doctrinal statements say, well, the whole purpose of man is just to sit there and glorify God. And so people think, well, I'm fulfilling my purpose if I just sort of go into kind of an unthinking, just happy, I'm so thankful God is God. He is great.

He's good. Amen. And you just kind of try to get emotional about God.

And people will work this up and they'll put some instrumentation and some music behind it and they'll get somebody to do some repetition and some of the standard classic group psychology and self-hypnosis gets into there. And this is not God's purpose. God has got legions of angels that can look at him and sing, holy, holy, holy.

We're in this short life and we can't see God. Do you ever wonder why we can't just look up in the sky and here's this great big rift in the heavens like Stephen saw when he was being stoned and there's God on his throne. There's Jesus Christ at his right hand.

And why can't we just look up there and see him and praise him? Because that's not our purpose. We are not here to just sit around and try to generate for ourselves an emotional experience

about God. And this sounds like it's bordering on blasphemy.

And I apologize if it does. But we're here for a purpose. Another crude analogy from my crude past in the military.

Marines love the Marine Corps. That's a given. Everybody knows that.

The esprit de corps in the Marine Corps, there is nothing bigger, there's nothing that lasts longer. Long after your official ties have been severed, if you've ever been in the Marine Corps, guys that were in the Marine Corps for 12 months in 1944 and are now octogenarians in wheelchairs, first thing they will tell you about themselves is, I was a Marine. There's a lot of esprit de corps and appreciation for the Marine Corps, all the fine principles that it stands for.

And I'm one of them. And I'll be the first to chime right in. But if you think about it, that's not the purpose.

The Marine Corps doesn't sign guys up to just run around and sing the glories of the Marine Corps. It's a fine component of being a Marine or having been a Marine. But we move on from that.

We don't just sit around making monosyllabic noises and grunting to each other about, isn't the Marine Corps great? It is a type of life, even in the secular world, it is a way of approaching challenges. It is basing your approach to things on solid, proven principles, on not being intimidated, not shying back, not taking your personal well-being into account. When you recognize that this is the mission, you will die to accomplish the mission, if need be.

But your goal is to live to accomplish the mission. Let the other poor slob die for his country like Patton said. We want to live and accomplish the mission.

But to just sit around and glory in that, it is the living of it that's much more important, if you catch my comparison here. We don't want to just have as an end in itself, let's all get together in a big group and just glorify God. That has its place, but we don't stop there.

It is the living of the life that that wonderful God has put before us and called us to that is the goal. We don't just sit around and encourage our esprit. That's what tends to happen when we come to these wonderful Christological passages.

We say, isn't God great? Isn't Christ great? And all of those things are true, but let's keep in mind at the same time that we're being presented this for a purpose. The reason the Marine Corps builds esprit into Marines is not so that they'll go around and tell everybody else how great the Marine Corps is or just sit around thinking how great the Marine Corps is or how great they are because they're a Marine. It is to motivate them to think that way and live that way as they go about their tasks.

Somebody is down there in the head with a toothbrush scrubbing around the toilets. Somebody is out there digging ditches and somebody is right behind them filling them in. It can be a drudge.

It can be mundane. People can think this is pointless. This is stupid.

And many of the things in the military, I have to tell you, I think frankly are stupid and pointless. Some of the money that is spent, some of the projects that are undertaken are in fact pointless. But we do even the pointless things well.

We don't understand. It may seem to us to not make any sense, but if somebody is going to be out here digging this ditch, it is going to be the best ditch that has been dug by anybody on this base today. I am the digger and nobody will outshine me in digging.

If I'm filling, no one will outshine me in filling because I'm a Marine and when I'm given an assignment, I do it as well as it can possibly be done by my two hands. Why? Because that's part of the ethos of being a Marine. Well, in the spiritual realm, which is infinitely transcendent to the things I've been talking about, when we think about Christ and how great He is, it ought to build in us the same forward-looking motivation for living our life.

It's not just an end in itself. We don't just stop and say, well, if I can kind of get an emotional experience going about appreciation of Christ, I've pretty well accomplished my goal. That's not it.

It should build into us that appreciation, but it should also move us forward. It should propel us forward into challenges with verve, with vitality, with joy, with sand in our craw. This is what God has put before me.

He knew it in eternity past. Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He's my example.

He's my Savior. Let's go do it. There's a purpose, in other words, to what we're about to see here about Jesus Christ that goes beyond appreciation.

It is motivation. It is fiber building in our spiritual being. So what is it that this wonderful section of Scripture says? Let me get back to it from Ephesians.

He introduces this, as I said, in verse 13, because he's been talking about what God has done for us. And it's motivating. This is why it's a part of Paul's prayer.

Paul says this is what ought to be happening for believers. Why? Because he has delivered us into light from darkness. Now there's another study that we could spend three weeks on, just light and darkness in Scripture.

If you have embarked, as I have encouraged all of us to do, on some time of personal study and meditation, this is a fruitful thing to look at. Look at what the Bible says about light and darkness. Let me give you just a few suggestions.

And I'm just taking these from the Thompson chain reference. This, by the way, I'm not telling you to go out and buy another Bible. But if you have access to the Thompson system, for a long time I didn't understand it.

I'd see Thompson chain reference Bibles and I thought, well, chain reference sounds like you just jump from verse to verse to verse to verse. That doesn't seem very helpful. But if you take the time to sit and figure it out, it really is a wonderful aid to getting around in the Word of God.

Because in addition to marginal notes that will take you from one verse to another on a similar topic, there's a wonderful summary. In fact, if you're sitting in this room, I can show you. Probably, how much is that? Maybe 20% of this Bible, 20-25% of this Bible, is all the Thompson comprehensive Bible helps in the back.

This includes a concordance, but it also includes a topical. It's sort of like Nave's topical Bible, but it's different. You can use Nave's in this and get different things from each one.

But anyway, I say all that to say, I'm going to go back here to the Thompson section on light and darkness. And just read you a few of the verses that this suggests. And the wonderful thing about this is they don't just give you references, the text of the verse is printed here.

That's why it's so big. So it references Balaam's prophecy in Numbers 24. Part of what Balaam says back then is, I see him, but not now.

I behold him, but not near. A star shall come out of Jacob. A scepter shall rise out of Israel and batter the brow of Moab and destroy all the sons of Tumult.

This is one of the earliest specific prophecies of Christ in the Old Testament. And it refers to him as a star coming out of Jacob. What is a star? It is a luminous body.

It is a source of light. It is something that you reference in the heavens and you can guide yourself by. Navigation by the stars is as old as putting a boat in the water.

Isaiah 9-2 and Numbers and Isaiah are both referenced in the New Testament in connection with the birth of Christ. Isaiah 9-2, the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. This is prophetic of Jesus Christ coming.

Jesus Christ, his coming into the world, it is light shining in a dark place. And you can immediately think of many other things. Jesus himself said, you all are the light of the world.

He says, I am the light of the world. He says, the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of the Father. There are lots of references to light.

Light is a wonderful thing. We know what it does for plants. We know what it does for us.

It brings health. It cleanses disease. You can take something with mildew and put it in the sun and it will kill it.

Light is a healthy, beneficial growth, stimulating growth. It is necessary for growth. You can't grow without light.

In Isaiah 30-26, talking about the kingdom in the future, the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun and the light of the sun will be sevenfold. As the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord binds up the bruise of his people and heals the stroke of their wound. When Israel is restored, when God's covenant promises are fulfilled, this is the millennial kingdom and beyond, its light will be sevenfold.

Does it mean that it's actually, you think about what would happen if the sun was seven times hotter. It reminds you of the three Hebrew children. He says, make the furnace seven times hotter.

Well, a seven times hotter sun, in literal terms, would fry everything. But it's a picture of prosperity. It's talking about how wonderful light is.

And the light will be sevenfold. It will be seven times as beneficial. Seven times as much a blessing.

Malachi 4-2, to you who fear my name, the son of righteousness, S-U-N, the son of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings. You think, well, now there's kind of a mixed metaphor. You've got the sun and then you've got wings.

But this is poetic language. It's talking about health and benefit. The sun is going to rise.

There's going to be healing. And the picture of wings has the idea of protection, of preservation and care. You shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves.

John, of course, in John chapter 1, talks about Christ coming into the world. The world in him was life and that life was the light of men. It was the true light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

John 8-12, Jesus says, I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness but have the light of life. So light and life are linked in the Old Testament scriptures and in the New.

Everything connected with life. You go back to your scientific definition of life. What is it? Well, it reproduces.

It's one of the characteristics of life. Anything that's alive reproduces. Cells that are alive, they divide and reproduce.

Life and light, respiration and photosynthesis for plants and all these things, light and life are very closely linked. So, in John 12-46, Jesus says, I have come as light into the world that whoever believes in me should not abide in darkness. So, these are some things you can look at.

Look at these passages that talk about light and darkness. It's a very prominent illustration and theme in the scripture for what God does for us. Paul makes use of this in Colossians when he says that we have been transferred out of darkness and conveyed into the kingdom.

And so you would think, well, he's going to say we've been transferred out of darkness into the light. But he does the unexpected thing here because he has already said that we are partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. And that's an odd phrase.

He says, why didn't he just say he has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints? And then put a period there. But it's the saints in the light. Why do we have an inheritance? Why are we partakers of anything? Why are we saints? Because we're in the light.

All of these things take place in the light. It's the light that makes that possible. How much work do you have to do to receive the light? You think about even our little electronic devices that are powered by light.

What effort does it take to capture the light? It's a completely passive operation, isn't it? I was fascinated as a boy in junior high when we started. It had the little vacuum thing shaped like a light bulb and it had a little spinning deal inside of four little veins on it, kind of like a wind vane or something. But all you had to do was set it in the light of the sun and the little thing would just start spinning like a top inside by nothing but the light.

And then they had these photoelectric cells and you could just set them in the sun and voltage would take place. And it didn't do anything. You didn't have to turn a crank.

You didn't have to operate a pump or push or pull anything. The light empowers. The light has energy within it.

And it's a reminder to us. We are in the light. The light gives us the power.

The light enables us. The light makes us grow. The light is our life.

And it is something that we absorb just by being in it. Why does 1 John 1.9 have such impact for us? If we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. It goes back to 1 John 1.7. If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship, each with the other, us with him, he with us.

And the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. The cleansing in 1 John 1.9 is conditioned on being in the light, walking in the light. Everybody is agonized over, well, do you mean these terrible reprobates can just name their sins and God will forgive them? You've got to take 1 John

1.9 with 1 John 1.7. If we walk in the light, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us because that's where the life is.

That's where the power is. That's where Christ himself is and fellowship with him. Our strength and our life comes from him.

When we look forward to the mundane details of our life and our day and our relationships and our tasks, where does the supernatural approach come from? It's because we're in the light. It's because we are united with Christ and it's a real connection, but it's in the light. Our partaking of the inheritance, we're qualified for it, but we seize and lay hold of it in the light.

God has transferred us out of darkness into the light. That's the opportunity that we have. No matter how bleak circumstances may look or no matter how bad people may be handing it to us, we're in the light.

God transferred us there. There's nobody that can push us out of the light. We have to walk out on our own.

God put us in the light. God transferred us out of darkness. And there's nobody that can overrule God's say-so.

If God says you're in the light, you're in the light. But sometimes we head into the darkness on our own. But we want to pick up this idea of being in the light and how does Paul move from being transferred into that kingdom of light? How does he go from that to Jesus Christ Himself? We're going to pick up at that point when we return from our break.