

Thankful in Christ

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[0 : 00] Hey, well, good morning. Open up your Bibles, if you would, please, to Colossians chapter 3. Colossians 3, we're going to cover three verses today. Verses 15, 16, and 17.

And I want to just read this for us as an introduction, and then we'll jump into our passage. It says this, And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.

Again, Colossians chapter 3, verse 15. If you're using the Pew Bible, it's on page 984. Okay, let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body, and be, what church?

Thankful. Verse 16. 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, what church?

Thankfulness in your hearts to God. Verse 17. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving, what church?

[1 : 03] Thanks to God the Father through him. Well, what a fitting passage for this month. We're going to kind of designate this as kind of our month of thanks.

October was kind of our month of prayer. This is our month of thanks. We want to just remember the significance of thanksgiving. And a way that we're going to do that, we're going to do that in two different ways. First, we're going to bring to you, kind of by way of video, a thanksgiving message from one of our missionaries to remind us of the importance of thanks and to call our attention to something specific from our missionary that we can be thankful for.

We can join them in thanks. We can pray with them in thanksgiving. The second is at the end of this month, this month of thanksgiving, we're going to have a thanksgiving offering. We're going to call it maybe a harvest offering.

And we want to invite you. We're going to let you know some specific ways that you can contribute in giving to our missionaries to help them in a strategic way. And we're going to invite you to participate with us in giving thanks through giving thanks in your giving, financial giving, to God that now then blesses our missionaries.

So let me just begin. We'll begin with this little video from the Davises. Hey, Maranatha. I just wanted to share with you some things that we're thankful for.

[2 : 28] I was going to have Lindsay join me in this, but she hasn't been feeling well. And that just kind of goes into the first thing we're thankful for, that even though that there is some sickness going around in the house right now, overall we've been much healthier and able to do a lot more things lately.

So super thankful for that. Thankful for being able to start Baylistan Community Church this year in June and excited for the opportunities that have come because of that.

Thankful for the purchase of the building that is really soon here. The solicitors have been talking to each other forever. But we're certainly thankful that all the funding has come in and even some of the renovation funds that we're going to need.

So super thankful for that and thankful for you guys for contributing to that as well. Thankful for some of the conversations we've been able to have with people that just some of the softening hearts that are happening that we see and even opportunities that Lindsay's had to go into the school to be able to share the gospel very clearly and openly.

It's been encouraging. Recently we were able to get away with some friends that visited from New York and certainly thankful for those times of rest that come.

[3 : 45] We're thankful for times as a family we've been able to just get around the kitchen table and while we're eating just share some of the things that we're thankful that God allowed us to have for that day or just in general.

And those have been sweet times as a family. Recently Lucy and Ruben we've been going through a baptism book together and they're desiring to get baptized and so thankful for that.

And yeah just thankful for what God is doing and allowing even churches like you to pray for us and support us here. Certainly thankful for all those things. So I hope that your November goes well and that you remember all the things that God has provided for you guys and can be thankful for those things.

Thanks. What a blessing to partner with other missionaries and I trust that you'll be lifting them up in prayer and maybe even reaching out and saying hello to them throughout this month and letting them know that you're praying for them.

You're thankful for God's work in their lives. So if you're there with me in Colossians chapter 3 we're just going to take this a piece at a time and we're going to try to this is an experiment this morning.

[5 : 02] Okay. We're going to it says in verse 16 that we're to teach and admonish one another with singing. Okay. Now I'm not going to sing the message.

I will spare you from that. But we will sing together as we're working through this passage and try to build these truths and remind ourselves of the truths from the word of God that inform our hearts and this will be a prayer for us.

I trust this will be an exhortation for you in instructing and encouraging others. So let's see how this goes. The first command there are three commands in this passage.

The first command is found in verse 15. It says this and let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts to which indeed you were called in one body and be thankful.

Help me fill in that first blank. What does it say? Let the peace of Christ rule. Great. You guys are all stars. Fantastic. Let the peace of Christ rule in your heart.

[6 : 06] We find in these three verses some very specific instruction. The Apostle Paul is interested in a church that is healthy, that is vibrant, that is active, that is demonstrating that they share life with Christ and Christ shares life with them and each command that we look at here is reinforced and undergirded by this spirit, this heart of thankfulness.

Thankfulness. Now in three different verses, three different times, you think the Apostle Paul thinks about your thankfulness. You better believe he does. Thankfulness will be the hallmark of this church.

It will be kind of the crowning jewel of this church and we're going to see that as we move our way through this. But this opening command, let the peace of Christ rule. What comes to your mind when you hear that command?

Let the peace of Christ rule. Well maybe you think about rest. Maybe you think about the absence of turmoil. Maybe you think about a heart that has been able to escape the chaos of life somehow. But the truth is that that is not our experience so often. We're given this command, let the peace of Christ rule. But the reality is that we don't experience the peace nearly as much as we'd like to.

[7 : 28] There's this anxiety in our hearts. There's this frustration that wells up. There is this fear of circumstances. There is this anger at something.

And the peace seems so elusive. How could Paul issue such a definitive command? Let the peace of Christ rule.

Like as if we can just flip the switch and now all of a sudden, shazam, peace. Ha ha! I got it.

Wouldn't that be great? What is going on here?

What's important for us to understand as we work through this passage is that peace is there, but there's something that must happen in our hearts in order to enjoy the peace that's present there.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your heart. Consider for a moment who is writing this. What do we know about the Apostle Paul and his experience? We know that the Apostle Paul, in the time of the writing of this verse, is in prison.

[8 : 35] He is in a Roman jail. And he has been beat to a bloody pulp through the course of his ministry. We could read that. We don't have time for it this morning. You know how it goes.

Five times he was whipped. Three times he was beaten with rods. He was a night and a day in the sea. He dangers wherever he goes. He is being chased by difficulties.

And yet, it is the Apostle Paul who issues this command, let the peace of Christ rule in your heart.

Peace that seems so elusive to us and should have been absolutely gone for the Apostle Paul is present.

And he wants us to enjoy that same peace. Well, there are some things that we can learn about this peace. And there are just three simple truths that I want to draw out.

First, I want you to understand that this peace belongs to Christ. This peace belongs to Christ. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.

[9 : 41] It's not a peace, by the way, that you bring to the table. It's not a peace that belongs to you. It's a peace that doesn't come from you.

It's a peace that belongs to Christ, belongs to Christ, and has been distributed to us to enjoy. It's a peace that belongs to him.

Second, it's a peace that's meant to rule in your hearts. And what I love about this passage in verses 15 all the way to verse 17, you see all of these plurals, these hearts, this use of the word you, which is a second person plural.

And so while there's this collective body, this group of people, they're all enjoying it together. Their hearts are unified in peace because it's a peace that belongs to Christ.

Singular, his peace. Singular, belongs to him, distributed to the body. This group of hearts, unified together in peace.

[10 : 48] Third, it's a peace that is already present. It's a peace that's already present. And like, Andrew, what are you talking about? Well, notice it says, let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.

He does not say pray for peace. He doesn't say strive for peace. He doesn't say go and obtain peace. He says, let it rule. It's already there. It's already present. Just let it have its way.

Let it officiate your heart. That's the word for rule. Let it be the officiator, the umpire of your life. Let it call the shots. Let it have its way.

Remember Christ's words to the apostles when Jesus says this in John 14, 26. He says, The helper, The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all things I have said to you.

Well, what did the Spirit instruct? What's the Holy Spirit going to do? Verse 27 says this, Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you.

[11 : 54] Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. If you, by faith, have accepted Jesus as your Savior, if you have placed your faith in Him, God through His gracious gift has given to you His Holy Spirit.

His Spirit of peace rests in you. Let the Spirit of peace have its way. We will learn about this peace of Christ enabled by the Spirit throughout the New Testament.

But it's the kind of peace that we can experience individually. But notice, it's to which you are called in one body. It's meant to be enjoyed as a body corporately.

So you need to ask yourself the question, is the peace of Christ reigning in your life? Are you experiencing God's peace today? Does that peace of Christ draw you together?

Or is it the kind of life that you see is pushing you apart? You see, the peace that God has given to you is meant to pull us together.

[13 : 15] It's that unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace that we find in Ephesians chapter 4. And how do we know if that peace is present?

How do we know that peace is present? Well, you know because it always produces thanksgiving. It always produces thanksgiving. and be thankful, Paul says.

This was the continuing expression of the Apostle Paul and we could touch on every single one of the letters that the Apostle Paul wrote where he says, I thank God for you, Corinth.

I thank God for you, Galatia. I thank God for you, Philippi. I thank God for you, Rome. All of the churches that the Apostle Paul is thankful for, it was an expression of the work of God in his life.

So what does it mean when we're not choosing thanks? What does that mean when we say, no, I'm not going to be thankful? Well, if we aren't choosing thankfulness, then you're not allowing the peace of God to rule in your heart.

[14 : 22] You're not going to enjoy God's peace. And if you aren't allowing thankfulness to clothe your life, not only are you not going to experience the peace of God, but you're not allowing the Holy Spirit to have his way in your life.

And there's one of two options there. Either you're quenching the Holy Spirit, or you don't have the Holy Spirit. Those are the two options. Are we allowing the peace of Christ to reign in our life?

You know, the Apostle Paul, excuse me, the psalmist, talks about the significance of peace. And I love how the psalmist puts it, David, he says, when he's feeling anxious, he says, why so downcast,

oh my soul?

Put your hope in God. And so this song that we're going to sing now is that prayer for us, a prayer to say, Lord, I want your peace to reign in my life.

I want my soul to enjoy rest. So, be still, my soul. Let's sing this together. Sing together.

[15 : 34] Be still, my soul, the Lord is on my side. Bear patiently, the cross agree for pain.

Leave to thy God, to order and provide. In every change, he faithful will remain.

Be still, my soul, thy best, thy heavenly plan. Through thorny ways, leads to a joyful wind.

be still, my soul, thy God, the thunder day, to guide the future as he has the past.

Thy hope, thy confidence, let nothing shake. All now, mysterious, shall be bright at last.

[16 : 49] Be still, my soul, the waves of winds to blow, his voice who ruled while he dwelt below.

In who I rest, in who I found thy hope, in I trust, you never let me go.

I place my life within your hands alone. Be still, my soul.

And of course, we can pray that because there's a source of peace. peace. The God of peace will be with you. Christ desires for us to enjoy the benefits of peace.

And that's what this next song will help to direct our attention to. Are you weary? Have you laden?

Come and lay your burdens down.

[18 : 02] Jesus calls you, Jesus draws you, rest in hand. He is gentle, he is lowly, he delights to bring us peace.

Tender shepherd, mighty Savior, rest in him. Are you hopeless? Are you hopeless?

Are you guilty? God, in shame for all your sin, he pursues you to forgive you, rest in him.

He has paid for every failure, mercy flows in endless streams, come and follow, freedom calls you, rest in him.

Are you waiting in your sorrow for this broken world to live?

[19 : 15] He is coming, soon returning, rest in him. We will see him, we will see him, we will love him, oh, what hides of grace we're in, from his kindness every promise will fulfill.

Trust in Jesus, trust in Jesus, he will keep us to the end. How sure his compassion for us, oh, how deep is his love, so come, come to Jesus at rest, amen.

There is real rest that we can enjoy in Jesus. So let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, and next we see, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

Verse 16 says this, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing songs and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God. This word for dwell, to dwell in you richly, is not a normal word for dwell in the New Testament. It's a compound word. It's the word in and then the word house.

[20 : 58] So in the house really means to feel at home, to feel at home, to not be a guest, to not be a stranger, to not just pop in once in a while, but to be a permanent resident, a part of the family, to be at home.

You know how that is. There are those places that you go and it's like, ah, I finally feel home. I'm at home. And that's how God wants us to experience the word.

The word of Christ will have that in home kind of feel, that it's the kind of word that we feel comfortable with.

And there is this sense in which we enjoy the benefits of that assurance that Christ is there. Charles Spurgeon said of John Bunyan, he says, if you prick him anywhere, you will find that his blood is bibline.

The very essence of the Bible flows from him. He was filled up with the word of God. And so that when he was pricked, what flowed out was blood.

[22 : 11] The bibline part of blood, the very essence of the word of God flowed from him. The same is true for us. When you're bumped, when you're agitated, when someone kind of bumps into you, as it were, what spills out of that glass?

What spills out of that life? What spills out will be an indication of what was in your life. And what flows out of your life, which, by the way, and to my shame, what flows out of my life so many times is frustration and anger and irritation.

But what should flow out, if the word of God is there, is thanksgiving. These words of faith, these words of confidence in what Christ has done, that when there is agitation and when there is frustration and when there is the bumping as it were, that what flows out of us is what we put in is the word of God.

I love how the psalmist puts this throughout Psalm 119, here is just a sampling of some of the instruction. He says, in the ways of your testimony, I delight as much as in all riches. I will delight in your statutes. I will not forget your word. My soul is consumed with longing. I love that. Consumed with longing for your rules at all times.

[23 : 40] Your testimonies are my delight. They are my counselors. For I find my delight in your commandments, which I love.

Do you love the word of God? Is it your delight? Is it the word of God that you seek to put into your life? Notice in our passage, Colossians 3.15 says, let the peace of Christ rule in your, what church? Hearts. And then he repeats this in verse 16, let the word of Christ dwell in your hearts. Why? It's because this is not about going through the motions.

It's not about doing what you're supposed to do because you're supposed to do it. And that's important for us to do. But it's doing it because you're driven by love for Jesus. It's in your heart. God has transformed you from the inside. You see, the externals can be manufactured. The inside is what God really cares about.

[24 : 45] Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart. And Christ's strongest rebuke, remember, was to the Pharisees. Why? Not because they weren't doing the right things, but because they were whitewashed tombs.

They were those who were clean on the outside, but the real life, the life deep down inside, was full of dead men's bones. It was dead.

It was lifeless. Does the word of Christ dwell in your hearts? Do you love the word of God? Do you delight in it? Are you longing for the word of God to inform your mind and to instruct your heart and to move you in the direction of love for Jesus?

It leads to learning. Learning that comes through teaching and admonition, but notice that this teaching and admonition is happening through the context or the conduit of singing.

[25 : 49] So often, the singing is kind of the outflow of a heart that is intertwined not just with the truth of God, but with thanksgiving, and it just kind of comes out in song.

Notice this inflow of the word leads to outflow of the word. This outflow of singing, this outflow of teaching, this outflow of admonition.

See, we can talk a good game. We can even spend hours in the word of God. We can fill up our minds with all the information, and it will do nothing about changing our heart.

But the word of Christ is supposed to dwell in us, which means it's meant to change us. So how do you know? How do you know the word of God is dwelling in your heart?

Well, there is one telltale sign. What do you think it is? Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving. Ephesians chapter 5, verse 20, it says, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[26 : 58] See, it's easy to be irritable, it's easy to focus on the negative, it's easy to be frustrated, but what helps our hearts to tune them in the right way and to cultivate a life of praise to God is to be those who choose thankfulness.

And I love how Paul puts this. Not just to be thankful for something, but to be thankful in something. thankfulness in your heart to God.

Of course, the Apostle Paul gives us so many great examples of this. He gives us this example of being in Philippi, you remember? And he's taught the word of God, and he's had the opportunity to lead Lydia to Christ and her family to Christ.

And then because of the troubles that happen, the people from Philippi come and they put him in jail, right? They put him in jail, they beat him with rods, and there he is, he's in stocks, he's uncomfortable, and what does he and Silas do?

They sing. They're thankful. And through their thankfulness and through their singing, the Spirit's power erupts. Earthquake comes, doors, prison doors opened, and a prison cell that is now available to the Apostle Paul, and what does he do?

[28 : 28] He shares Christ with the jailer, and the jailer and his entire family come to faith in Christ. Is our life marked by the word of God?

Is it marked with thanksgiving? This next song helps us to, it's kind of a prayer. God, do this for me. Allow your word to have its way in my life.

Let me not just know the truths, but let me live them out. Speak, O Lord, as we come to you, to receive the food of your holy word.

Take your truth, love. Let it deep in us, shape and fashion us, in your lightness, that the light of Christ might be seen today, in our acts of love, and our deeds of faith.
speak, speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us all your purposes for your glory.

[30 : 03] Speak, O Lord, and renew our might. Help us fresh the heights of your plans for us.

Truths are changed from the dawn of time that will let you down through eternity, and by grace will stand on your promises, and by faith we'll walk as you walk with us.

Speak, O Lord, till your church is built and the earth is filled with your glory.

A psalm that's familiar probably to all of you is Psalm 119, 105. It says, Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Let's just sing that simple chorus together. Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light unto my path.

[31 : 37] Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light unto my breath.

And of course, the word of God isn't just something that is there and not present. It's a word of God that we need to continue to remind ourselves of and it reminds us of the work of Christ, his beauty, the need that we have for him.

And so let's sing this simple chorus, Lord, I need you. Lord, I need you. Oh, I need you.

Every hour I need you. My one defense, my righteousness, oh God, how I need you.

Lord, I need you. Oh, I need you. Every hour I need you.

[33 : 01] My one defense, my righteousness, oh God, how I need you.

So let the peace of Christ rule in your heart. Let the word of Christ dwell in your heart. Now this one, this is a little different. Let the beauty of Christ show.

Let the beauty of Christ show. Well, Andrew, where in the world are you getting that? Well, I get that from verse 17. It says this, whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Well, what does that sound like? You're doing everything in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why? Because you want to glorify him. You want his beauty to show. You want the tenor of your life, the conversation of your life, the actions of your life to show him to draw attention to his beauty, his wonder, his glory, his majesty.

Of course, it's reminiscent of 1 Corinthians 10 31, whether therefore you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. You see, there's beauty and purity and a radiance about those who love Jesus.

[34 : 27] Have you given much thought to who you represent in the world? During the day, does it ever cross your mind, how would God think of this?

Or how your attitude or action or statement affect the way people think about the Lord Jesus? You know, our identity is locked up in him. Whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of Jesus.

You are bound to him and what you do reflects who he is. And my wife and I celebrated 28 years of marriage and we've had some opportunities over the last few months to go to some weddings.

And those of you who have ever been to a wedding will know that there is this moment, this moment that happens where somebody walks in the back. Who is that? The bride, yes.

And she walks in the back. It's my favorite moment of every single wedding because you know what I do? I want to see what the groom thinks about the bride.

[35 : 34] It's just that. It's an amazing moment. Preparation in weddings, you know, preparation takes months, happens months in advance where the future bride will think about her shoes, she'll think about the dress she's going to wear, she thinks about the kind of jewelry that he's going to like, she considers her appearance, she gives great attention to her hair, she might even get a manicure or a pedicure, she may spend a few extra hours at the gym, but every decision she makes is guided by one thought.

What does he think about my beauty? Does he like my hair better this way or that way? What jewelry will accent my beauty?

What perfume will he compliment? And she might look radiant on her wedding day to everybody else in the room, but she only cares about one person.

She cares about him. What does he think about my beauty? You see, Christ is also preparing for his bride. We find that in Ephesians chapter 5 verses 25 to 27 it says, Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of the water with the word.

Why? So that he might present the church to himself in splendor without spot or wrinkle or any such thing that she might be holy and without blemish.

[37 : 06] She looks beautiful. She's radiant. Does the beauty of Christ show through your life?

Is the beauty of Christ radiant in your life? You see, Christ is interested in the beauty of his bride. So what did he do? He deposited his beauty into her, his righteousness, his purity, his nature, his truth, because he wants so much for his bride to reflect his beauty.

This is now the third time in three short verses that the apostle Paul has drawn attention to thanks. He says, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. This giving thanks is this word that talks about this perpetual, continual activity of thanks that marks our life. Here Paul puts it positively, but in Philippians he puts it negatively.

In chapter 2 verse 14 when he says, do all things without complaining and disputing. Why? So that you may become blameless and pure. children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation among whom you shine as lights in the world.

[38 : 33] You see, our expression of thanks seals our holiness. Our expression of thanks seals our holiness. It's the crowning jewel on a life of faith, a life in Christ.

It reflects the quality of what Christ has accomplished when he's moving you into the peace of Christ. He's helping you to enjoy and dwell in the word of Christ.

And now the beauty of Christ is showing and it's showing up through thanksgiving. And it is the seal. It's the signature. It's the signature of holiness that Christ means to produce in every life that is given to him.

You see, a thankless life not only leads to despair and bondage for us, but it greatly obscures the beauty of Christ.

You choose to be thankless, you obscure Christ's beauty. It would be like this bride we've talked about, who now on her wedding day, she's just rolled out of bed.

[39 : 43] She's just put on her sweat pants. She wants to be comfortable. She has her t-shirt. She doesn't care about her hair. Her eyes are still bloodshot. She just woke up. She's exhausted. It's been a late night.

She got her sneakers on and then she shows up to walk down the aisle. And what is the people in the church who see her coming down the aisle, what do they think?

Not what or how could she do this to us, but how could she do this to him? How could she do this to him? The beauty is meant to reflect the wonder of God.

Get this, our grumbling hearts, our critical eye, our biting words, our disunified spirit, it might be a stain on our life, but our grumbling heart, but in our grumbling heart, we make a mockery of God. God. You've put him to open shame, as it says in Hebrews 6. 6. You've trampled him underfoot, as it says in Hebrews 10. 29.

[40 : 50] You have diminished his beauty, you have defamed his splendor, you have corrupted his glory. A person who should be giving thanks because of the word, and because of the word and deed, and doing it in the name of the Lord Jesus, instead, instead of giving thanks, essentially what you are saying is, God, you are not enough.

Your peace is not sweet enough, your spirit is not strong enough, your power is not sufficient enough, your ways are not pure enough, your mission for me is not great enough.

Your gifts to me are not extravagant enough, your future for me is not bright enough, your son's death was not good enough. A life with you in heaven, is not grand enough, I need more.

Every moment we choose to not be thankful, that is the spirit, the heart that we're communicating. So we need reminders, don't we?

And God has given us the gift of music as a reminder. This first song is Lord, you are more precious than silver. It's a simple song, and we'll just sing it as a, it's kind of an introduction to our next song, but Lord, you are more precious than silver.

[42 : 12] Let's sing this together. Lord, you are more precious than silver.

Lord, you are more costly than gold. Lord, you are more beautiful than diamonds.

And nothing I desire compares with you. See, God has given us himself.

He is worthy. He, of course, is of infinite value. And when he gives himself to us, the temptation for us to say, hey, look at me, look how great I am because of what Christ has done.

Instead, our boast needs to be in Jesus. Jeremiah chapter 9, verse 23 says, Thus says the Lord, let not the wise man boast in his wisdom.

