

Peace, Love, Happiness, & Thanksgiving

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[0 : 00] Well, isn't this passage just a bucket full of goodness? A real happy splash, isn't it? No one's able to find fault with any of these commands, I hope.

I think that's what makes preaching this passage so difficult, though. It's just too easy to sit here placidly agreeing with everything that we hear.

Mmm, hear, hear. But it goes in one ear and right out the other. And that's not what we want. We want what this passage is promising. We want what the Apostle Paul is promising us.

Because that's what God is promising us. And here, he's giving us his clear declaration of intent. And this is being prophesied from a prison.

Even though Paul's setting is grim, he's still enthused. His joy is coming through in this. So, whatever your current circumstances, God's promise is not thwarted.

[1 : 02] Paul is still rejoicing in God's plan, even though he's bound and shackled. And you may have shown up this afternoon feeling as though you've been imprisoned.

Just distanced from everything good and enjoyable. And that's okay. That's okay. This season's probably been pretty different. It's probably been pretty difficult.

But if we pull back the curtain, as this passage is doing, we can see what else has been going on. So, let's remember here. Let's look into this and see the greater reality.

And we can catch a glimpse of what's actually happening. So, God's plan. I even made hand gestures for this. God's plan.

Peace. Love. Happiness. Wrapped in thanksgiving. So, those are today's three. And it's pretty good, eh? Is it too good to be true?

[2 : 01] Does it sound naive? Is it incongruent with your experience? Well, that's okay, too. You don't need to worry one bit if that's not how you feel.

Because this is not your plan, but God's plan. It's the culture that he's creating. This is the kind of people he's turning us into.

A people that are abounding in peace, in love, and happiness. Wrapped in that thanksgiving. So, let's break it down. Verse 12.

Put on, then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, and all this other good stuff. But right now, I want to focus on chosen. God's chosen ones.

This is where the power comes from. It's God that's gone before us. We're not alone in this. I'm not here trying to drum up your gumption. This isn't our own gas that we're guzzling.

[3 : 03] This is God's plan. So, let's back it up for a second. If we can go to verse 9. And it'll be really helpful if you have Colossians. Oh, we don't have Bibles here anymore. You know what?

Don't worry about it if you don't have it. If you do, that's terrific. But I'll read you from verse 9.

Because this passage is so perfectly wound. I'd like to untie it a little bit so we can see the components.

And then tie it back together again. And walk away confident in the knowledge of God's mastery. His intent and his activity. So, verse 9.

Colossians 3. Do not lie to one another. Seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices. And have put on the new self. Which is being renewed.

In knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is neither Greek nor Jew. Canadian, Chinese, Brazilian. But Christ is all in all. So, Paul.

[4 : 00] He's speaking to the church. The church is in Christ. That's what makes it the church. And in Christ, those old distinctions, they're gone. They're still there.

But it's superficial. And don't get me wrong. Cultures are still, they're well loved by God. There's definitely room for diversity in the church.

But what counts above all things is Christ. So, that's the unity. Christ is all and in all. That supersedes everything. So, before we can celebrate our differences. And before we even think of complaining. Let us remember this. Christ is all and in all. Democrat, Republican, NDP, Liberal, Conservative. Whatever. Our disagreements within the church. Among us. They are held in the context of Christian unity. We are one in Christ. And he is all. And the consequence of this unity.

[5 : 01] This being united in and with Christ. Is that we have put off the old self. And we have put on the new self. Which is being renewed.

In the image of its creator. So, do you see this? It's a little weird. It's kind of like the kingdom of heaven. When they say that it's now. And not yet. We have past tense. We have put off the old self. And we have put on the new self. They're both past tense. But this new self. Is being made new.

It's being renewed. So, it's a process. And maybe that feels a little anticlimactic. Right? At our conversion. We don't just sprout wings.

And glow up a halo. And never have a stray thought again. There's a cocoon stage. You've put off the old self. And you've put on the new. These beautiful silk spun robes.

[5 : 58] But inside that cocoon. We're still just a bunch of goo. So, I don't know that caterpillars. Are aware of the butterflies. That they'll become. I'm sure it's a pretty confusing ordeal.

Probably a little painful. But we've got the blueprints. Right here in this book. This is God's master plan. And he's laying it out for us.

Clearly. These are the steps he's taking. And these are the steps. That we'll be taking with him. This is what the new life is going to look like. And increasingly so.

With every passing season. Get on board. Come along for this ride. Here's your cocoon. Put it on. Because you have been chosen by God. For this new life. For this new culture.

For his heavenly kingdom. He's going to make you. A right. Righteous citizen. And you'll be getting good glimpses. Of what that looks like. Here. And now.

[6 : 55] You are holy. And beloved. Loved by God. And he has set you apart. As his. And for his purposes. So this is the uniform.

The new robes. They're spotless. Homespun. Organic. Woven. With the finest strands. Of compassion. Kindness. Humility.

Meekness. Patience. And these. Compassion. Right. It's not just. Warm. Mushy feelings. The old definition. Of passion. Is.

Suffering. It's a real sympathy. To bear the burdens. Of others. And if we look at verse 13. Bearing with one another.

I told you. It was. It was intertwined. This. Is the new economy. All that old self's. Selfishness. That's. Sloughed off. It's being. Shed.

[7 : 51] As. You're being renewed. So if you've got complaints. You forgive each other. It sounds impossible. Right. Or. Improbable. At least. It's just.

Someone's just there. Just asking. For it. My younger brother. No. No. We forgive each other. Not very good at it. But that's okay. Because.

The Lord. Has. Forgiven you. You've. Failed. And. Dag gummit. There are failings. In the future. It's all right. To grieve this. But the Lord. Has.

Past tense. He has. Forgiven you. And you are. Fully. Forgiven. And living. In his. Forgiveness. With that slate. Wiped. Clean. We learn.

To forgive. As we've been forgiven. And not only. Have we been given. That supreme. Example. Of forgiveness. With all of our sins.

[8 : 45] Nailed. To the cross. But it's. His. Spirit. It's his spirit. Indwelling us. And teaching us how. And enabling us. To forgive one another.

But. All of this stuff. It gets its. Juice. From the next. Two verses. None of that last stuff. Works. The bearing with one another. None of that works. Without Christ's.

Love. And his peace. So verse 14. Above all these. Put on. Love. Which binds. Everything together. In perfect. Harmony.

And. Let the peace of Christ. Rule in your hearts. To which indeed. You were called. In one body. Hippies. Are a rip off.

That's. That's what I'm going to say today. Hippies are a rip off. Jesus. He's the original one. That's all about. That peace. And the love. I don't know.

[9 : 39] Have you guys seen this? This is the new sign. It's not just a heart like this. You put your thumb. And your forefinger together. And it makes. A little tiny heart. Just. Keep your heart still.

Your friends. Your family. But Jesus. He. He pulled it off. He actually lived out. That life. Of peace. And love. He's the real.

Countercultural. Revolutionary. That old system. It's fallen. It's rulers. Been locked up. And the old ways. Are being dismantled. It's a process though. It's a process.

And he's. He's doing this process. Through his church. We're grassroots. That means it's from. The bottom. Up. But it's. It's way.

Deep down. This isn't. Our solution. Right. We're not the ones. That are funding this. This is God's plan. Indeed. You were called. In one body.

[10 : 32] You were called. And chosen. And scripted. Was the word I wrote. And a red line appeared under it. It's not a real word. I guess I was thinking of. Enlisted. Recruited.

Called. And chosen. For a purpose. And God's going to finish that good work. That he began. So he called you. To be. One body. With Christ.

Who is all. And in all. As the head. So we. We are a unit. The church. Catholic. Is the word. Means universal. Capital C. The body of Christ.

We are. One. For Christ is all. And in all. And where he's going. We're going. That's why we can be thankful.

Imagine God was capricious. Given to sudden. And unaccountable changes. In mood. Or behavior. Yeah. That'd be the worst. But if you think about it.

[11 : 27] Right. He's not obligated. To be kind. Or loving. Or forgiving. Or even good. Zeus. Isn't good. Zeus is criminal. He tricks. He defiles.

He leaves a whole mess. God is different. Entirely different. He stands. By his word. He fulfills. He shows himself. As loving. He saves.

That's what the name. Jesus means. Yahweh. Saves. He doesn't only. Forgive sins. He gives us. New clothes. He invites us.

Into his kingdom. He adopts us. As his children. Fellow heirs. With Christ. But that's. That's not today's passage. Even in just today's passage though.

We see how gracious. He is. So look. Look at all these gifts. From him. Here. Put on this. New self. And here. Bloom.

[12 : 24] And produce. These ripe. And bountiful. Fruits of the spirit. So I'm going to go. Into the Greek here. And point out something. Pretty neat. The word gifts. In Greek.

Is charisma. That's why we call. Some Christians. Charismatic. It's because they like to emphasize. The spiritual gifts. It's usually in reference. To tongues and prophecy. But all Christians.

Of every denomination. Are truly charismatic. Because we've been given. All the gifts. We each have. Life. And breath. We get to experience.

The nourishing rains. Happy splashes. Of sunshine. And the trees. For shade. And delight. And your abilities. Your wonderful. Intelligence. Inventiveness.

Creativity. There's language. Culture. Families. And there's peace. There's kindness. We've been given. The ability to forgive.

[13 : 21] Even. As we've been forgiven. But above all. There's Jesus. He is the greatest gift. And in him. Are hidden. All the treasures. Of wisdom. And knowledge.

And he is yours. That God should. Give. His only son. Charisma. What a gift. But now. If we look at the root word. Of charisma. We find.

Charis. Charisma. Charis. Charis. Means. Grace. We get. Charity. It's loving. It's gracious. And our God. Indeed.

Is. Gracious. That's how he revealed himself. To Moses. The Lord. The Lord. A God. Merciful. And gracious. Slow to anger.

And abounding. In steadfast love. And faithfulness. What a God. What grace. We've received. And in our. Receiving. We give thanks.

[14 : 16] So verse 15. Be thankful. So if you check this. Check. Check this out. The Greek word. For thanksgiving. Is. Eucharisteo. Goodness. Gracious.

Do you see how they're connected? Eucharist. No. It's the receiving of that gift. Of that grace. The thanks. Because of his grace.

We get to display. Gratitude. These gifts. They multiply. His grace. Gives the gifts. And we give back thanks. It's ever flowing.

There's this closed circuit. Of grace. And gifts. And gratitude. And isn't it interesting. That communion. We also call it.

The Eucharist. It's the meeting place. In the bread and wine. We receive Christ. We commune. With him. And we also commune. With each other.

[15:12] With everybody. That shares the cup. And it's his love. That we put on. It's his love. That binds us together. In perfect harmony.

Not just our own. Flimsy feelings. It's. Yeah. When I said perfect harmony. The organ player. Should have. Hit that note. Strike a chord.

Harmony though. It's where the many. Are united. In one. And the result. Of this love. This unity. It's peace. It's peace.

With God. And with each other. And this isn't just. Some flimsy peace. You feel when the breeze. Is just right at the beach. As nice as that is. Verse 15.

Let the peace of Christ. Rule. In your hearts. The word for rule here. Is brabeuo. And it's the only place. That it occurs. In the New Testament. But the Greeks. They used it to speak.

[16:06] Of those who were responsible. For maintaining order. In their games. They're the referees. The brabeuo. The umpires. This is the peace. That rules. In our hearts.

It governs. Any complaints. We forgive. We bear with one another. Because it's the peace of Christ. That is directing us. Towards this path. Of peace. Of harmony. Of love.

Yet we practice humility. We're patient. Because we're all. In this together. All forgiven. All loved. All chosen. And called.

To this one body. And gifted. In specific ways. For the edification. Of all. God is a God. Who blesses. Abundant. In grace. And that commands.

To be faithful. To be thankful. Of course. We're thankful. I mean. Do you feel it welling up. Inside you. To have received. So much. And for this new self.

[17:05] To be continually. Renewed. We're not running. On our own steam. There may be down days. Even down seasons. But. We're being renewed. Yeah.

Be thankful. We lift high his name. How he overflows. In our very own hearts. It's not our own doing. It's the wellspring of life. And the more we return. To that fountain.

To the fountain. The better. Our thirst is quenched. How our sight is filled with him. And our minds. That's why. The word of Christ. Dwells richly. Among us.

Like in verse 16. We want to know. His word. Because it's how we come to know him. Better. It's not just. Some lifeless. Letters. From long ago.

There's a person behind it. Who's living and breathing still. And praying for us. Interceding for us. We read this word. And we speak. And we hear it.

[17:59] From each other. As well. Verse 16. With that word of Christ. Dwelling richly in us. There's teaching. And admonishing. In all wisdom. Wisdom. Wisdom is another result.

Of that new self. The being. Made new self. Wisdom. It rises. In relationships. Of meekness. And humility. Love. And servanthood. Rather than jealousy.

And selfishness. There's no wisdom in that. Wisdom is not. A solitary. Attainment. We don't embark. Upon this journey. Alone. It is a corporate.

Or relational. Attainment. That's how God likes to work. Is in the body. All together. Wisdom is given. And found. And forged.

In the fires. Of committed relationships. And in that wise congregation. You will find. Rejoicing. You can't hide the praise. That will be taking place.

[18:55] Singing those psalms. And hymns. And spiritual songs. How joyful. Isn't that a picture. Of joy. And gladness. Singing. Psalms.

And hymns. And spiritual songs. Eucharist. We do give thanks. In our worship. It's the fruit. It's the fruit. Its fruit is our praise.

So you know how charisma is a gift. And charis is grace. Is grace. Well, kara. Is the uttermost root. Of those words. And kara.

Kara. Means joy. And gladness. To this. You've been called. To be a body. A gifted community. That lives in.

Peace. And love. And joy. And thanksgiving. So beloved brothers. And sisters. Of St. John's. This is what God has chosen you for.

[19 : 50] This is what you've been set apart for. So that whatever you do. In word. Or deed. Filling out your taxes. Making pancakes. Right?

Kids at soccer practice. Putting on the bandages. Crying with a friend. Driving to work. Clipping your toenails. Starting a book club. Raking the leaves. Just smiling at your neighbors.

In every mundane thing. That occurs in your day. Do everything. In the name of our Lord Jesus. Giving thanks to God the Father through him.

This doesn't mean. Of course. You know. You have to say. Thank you God the Father. And the Lord Jesus Christ. Every time you turn on your car. But it does mean. You will become. More. And more conscious. Of all the manifold ways. In which God. Is blessing this world. And in that realization. Our response. It's gratitude.

[20 : 46] It's gratitude. It's a thanksgiving. That's been hard fought. And won. At the cross. By our Savior. By our Savior. The Lord Jesus Christ.

So verse 17 here. Whatever you do. In word or deed. Do everything. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Giving thanks to God the Father through him.

What a verse. Teach it to your kids. Memorize it with them. I didn't know that was going to be in the service. But perfect. Write it on your mirrors. So you can brush your teeth. And let it govern your days.

This verse shows us. That there are no ordinary moments. Nothing is truly mundane. The glory of God. Is bursting. At the seams.

And through thanksgiving. We recognize everything. As a gift from him. And give our own hearts. Back to him. Through song. Through praise. Christ is all.

[21 : 42] And in all. And God has chosen you. And called you. To become a vibrant. Life giving community. Of peace. And of love. And of happiness.

Giving thanks. Through Christ. So put on that love. Let the peace of Christ. Rule in your hearts. And be thankful. Rejoicing in the glory of it.

Because this is glorious. So you see how it's all tied together. In a big beautiful bow. And that's the scarlet thread. Christ crucified. And made alive.

The gift of God's own life. What grace. We give thanks. We praise. Rejoicing in adoration. Amen.