

Pentecost 5 / July 13, 2025

Colossians 1:14

*“He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”*

In Christ we have Redemption

Paul begins this letter greeting the believers at Colosse, saying “*Grace and Peace from God our Father.*” Grace is the unearned, undeserved love of God in Christ, which believers receive as forgiveness. Peace is the experience of receiving the unmerited love of God in Jesus in the forgiveness of sins. Paul approaches the believers at Colosse, whom he had not met personally, with grace and peace, because that’s how God approaches us in Christ Jesus. When Israel approached God at Mount Sinai they shrunk back in terror, seeing the mountain ablaze in holy fire. God’s holiness ignites terror in our hearts when it is not preceded and accompanied by grace in the forgiveness of sin. Christ has atoned for the sin of the world on the cross. God comes to us in Jesus with the grace of forgiveness, which we experience as peace. In Him we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Paul gives thanks for the faith of the Colossian believers and the love they have for other believers, whom he calls saints. A saint is a person made holy in forgiveness through faith in Jesus and baptism into His death. Faith is the first and greatest gift of God. Faith comes not by human will or by the exertion of our spirits. Faith comes by the exertion of the Holy Spirit working through the word of God: The law that convicts us of sin. The gospel that convinces us Jesus is the Saviour, our Saviour. Paul gives thanks that the Colossian believers received the truth of the gospel with believing hearts and gave evidence of faith by reaching out to others in love, especially to one another as believers in Christ and co-heirs of eternal life. His love opens our hearts to receive Jesus as our Saviour. His love inspires our spirits to believe. His love moves our hearts to share His love with others, especially with other believers. In Him we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

The faith and love of the believers at Colosse was inspired by the hope stored up for them in heaven. All believers throughout the world from every time and in every place, have a hope that is stored up for us in heaven. The hope that is stored up for us in heaven is our share of the resurrection of Jesus to a new and eternal life. A

life free from sin, the temptations of the world and the devil. A life free from every sorrow and sadness. A life in the presence of God, where joy reigns supreme and gladness never ends. The hope that is stored up for us in heaven is the fulness of the hope we have now through faith in Jesus. The hope that is stored up for us in heaven is the fruits of His sacrifice to redeem us from sin.

Jesus' sacrifice is the basis of the peace we have with God. We have peace with God because of the grace of forgiveness given in His sacrifice. Jesus' sacrifice is the foundation of our relationship with God as Father and with each other as children of the heavenly Father. Through the working of the Holy Spirit in the word and by the washing of holy baptism, we have been delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of light. Jesus is our Redeemer in time and for eternity. We live in the Kingdom of light now through faith. We will be transferred fully and forever into the kingdom of light in the resurrection of Jesus. In Him we have redemption!

Paul prays for the Colossian believers that their faith formed by the Holy Spirit through "*the word of truth, the gospel,*" would continue to grow that they "*may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.*" He prays they and we, would have a true knowledge of God and know how to live lives that are both pleasing to Him and a blessing to one another. Knowledge of God comes in several ways. First, through the creation, which declares the glory of God. Knowledge of God is imbedded in the human spirit, which senses, albeit dimly, His presence and longs for communion with Him. True knowledge of God comes through the scriptures. In the scriptures inspired by the Spirit, God makes Himself known. He makes Himself known as the only God, the Creator of all things. Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God in three persons. He makes Himself known as love. Most importantly, God makes His love known in forgiveness in Jesus our Redeemer.

God gives life. God sustains the life of all things living. God constantly renews the life of all living things. Most importantly in the life of humans, God forgives. God gives the fullest expression of His love in joining Himself to our humanity in the humanity of Jesus. He bore our sins that separated us from God. He received the condemnation our sins deserved so we would receive redemption, the forgiveness of sin and have true communion with God as His children. God loved the world, estranged from Him through sin, rebellious to His will and denying of His existence. God loved the world so deeply He gave Jesus to die for its sins. God loves the world so much that He gave Jesus to be the Saviour of all people, especially of those who believe. The Spirit calls us to believe. It is by believing that we receive the grace of

forgiveness and the peace of His love. The Spirit opens our hearts to receive Jesus and to believe in Him as our God and Saviour. Believe in Him! In Him we have redemption, the forgiveness of sin.

Paul thanks God for the faith of the Colossians. But he also wants them, us and all believers, to grow in faith through the knowledge of God as He reveals Himself in the scriptures. Knowledge is power. Knowledge of God is a power that can liberate, which is what God wants in Christ Jesus. But knowledge can also be used as a tool to manipulate and as a club to beat others into submission. The believers at Colosse were baby Christians. They had only recently come to faith through the ministry of Ephraim, whom Paul mentions at the start of this letter. Having come to know God in Christ Jesus, there were many things they needed to learn about God from the scriptures. There were many things they needed to unlearn about God from their previous experience as pagan worshippers and as Jews influenced by Greek culture and philosophy. We need to learn about God through the scriptures. The scriptures make us wise unto eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ.

We make many assumptions about God, consciously and unconsciously. We need to screen them through the filter of scripture. We need to grow in the knowledge of God through the understanding of scripture. Natural religion, the religion that is in our hearts as fallen creatures, tells us things about God and about ourselves that are not true according to scripture. Natural religion tells us we have to do things to please God. God in scripture tells us He is pleased with us for the sake of Jesus and everything He did to earn our salvation and effect our redemption. God wants us to do things. He wants us to love Him with our whole heart. He wants us to love our neighbour as ourselves. He especially wants us to love one another as sisters and brothers in Christ, deeply and from the heart. He wants us to realize that we love because He loves us. We are pleasing to God, because He is already pleased with us for the sake of Christ Jesus. We do things that are pleasing to Him not to make Him love us. We do them, because He loves us. We love because He first loved us.

We naturally think there are things we have to do to please God (that's the way it is with other people). We think we have to do certain things to make it into His good books and to get into the most important book, the book of life and make it to heaven. Paul reminds us in our text that it is God who qualifies us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. God qualifies us, makes us worthy of eternal life

in His presence, for the sake of Jesus. His life fulfilled the law. His death atoned for our sins. Jesus is our Redeemer. The Redeemer rescues those in peril, because of their own folly. The Redeemer delivers those who are condemned, because of their sins. The Redeemer saves those who are suffering the consequences of their actions. Jesus is our Redeemer from the sin that condemns and entraps us. Jesus is our Redeemer from the devil who allures us and accuses us in our consciences and in the presence of God. In Christ we have redemption, the forgiveness of sin.

Jesus redeems us from the condemnation of our sin, which is eternal separation from the presence of God. Jesus redeems us from the futility of life without God and without hope. In Christ we have a real and living hope in all things. Our hope is to be with God in eternity. Jesus gives us hope now by redeeming us from the futility of life in which we hate, are hated and live in strife and competition with others. Christ empowers us with His Spirit and enables us to live with one another in peace as sisters and brothers, children of the heavenly Father. Jesus redeems us from the domain of darkness so that we can live as children of light; loving God as our heavenly Father and loving each other as sisters and brothers. This is the first fruits of the redemption we receive now through the forgiveness of sin. We will receive the fulness at the return of Christ and our share in His resurrection.

All of this comes from God who has qualified us through Christ to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. Receive His grace. Believe His Name. In Him we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. In Jesus' Name. Amen