

Sermon or Lesson: Colossians 1:12 (NIV based)
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Joyfully Thankful About Being Qualified And Blessed By God

INTRODUCTION: Have you ever given a very expensive gift or service to someone or a couple, after which they did not even acknowledge your gift or generosity? How did their lack of acknowledgement and/or their lack of gratitude make you feel? Does your generosity deserve a respectful and appreciative response?

Let's study some of the generosity that God extends to us true believers, and what our response should be.

READ: Colossians 1:12, with vv.9-11,13-14 for context

BACKGROUND:

- - God intends that faith in Jesus as the Christ is to be accompanied by having 'love for all the saints' and other spiritual dynamics, which are to be produced through the gospel. (vv.4-6)
- - And furthermore, God intends for the gospel to "bear fruit" in the lives of people "all over the world", like it was doing in the lives of the Colossian believers. (v.6)
- - We believers are to possess a Kingdom perspective that is characterized by "spiritual wisdom and understanding", so that we can correctly determine and comprehensively live in accordance to God's will. (v.9)
- - But due to our corrupted perspective, we believers need increasing enlightenment from God through gaining spiritual knowledge from His Word, in order to improve our ability to determine and live in accordance to God's will. (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:9-16)
- - So, to live a life of spiritual maturity, that pleases God and bears fruit for His Kingdom, we believers must be continuously growing in our knowledge of God so that we can determine and live according to His will. (v.10)
- - For assistance, God allows and desires that believers access His power to fortify them with "great endurance and patience" that will help enable them to successfully engage in and accomplish the many facets of "living a life worthy of the Lord". (vv.11,10)

vv.11d-12a - READ **"and joyfully giving thanks to the Father,"**

[Lesson Question: From the immediate context of verses 9-12, discuss, analyze, and formulate why true believers should be "joyfully giving thanks to the Father".]

SECTION POINT: God is actively working to bless us true believers, which should motivate us to be "joyfully giving thanks" to Him.

- - Logically, if we properly exercise the self-denial, the self-sacrifice, the patient endurance, and the "pleasing God in every way" that are described in verses 10-11, then we are to fulfill them while maintaining a good attitude, even to the extent of being "joyful" and "thankful" that God assists us with His "all power" to fulfill these disciplines successfully.
- - But, it is not acceptable to God for us to go through the motions of fulfilling these activities of the faith while possessing and harboring an indignant or sour attitude. (e.g. James 3:13-15)

- - We are to be "joyful" and "give thanks to the Father" - "being grateful and actively expressing [that] gratitude" to Him. (Strong's #2168)

- - Certainly, "all spiritual wisdom and understanding" should likewise encompass having an appreciation for all that the Father has done for us believers. (v.9)

- - Specifically cited here in this section of verses in Colossians chapter 1, the Father assists us in "living a life worthy of the Lord" by "strengthening [us] with all power" for "great endurance and patience". (vv.10,11)

- - Through this assistance, the Father is blessing us now, in this life, so that we can earn more blessings on Judgment Day, the culmination of when we fully receive our "share in the inheritance of the saints". (v.12)

- - Thereby, if we fathom the depth and the ramifications of what the Father is doing for us now, we believers should have significant reasons to be "joyful" and "thankful".

v.12b - READ "who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light."

[Lesson Question: Discuss, analyze, and formulate the dynamics and ramifications within the process of God qualifying those persons who believe.]

SECTION POINT: God blesses us who believe by qualifying us, including us, giving us an inheritance, and sanctifying us.

- - For us who have become true believers, the Father "qualifies" us to be acceptable to Him, making our condition appropriate so that He considers us to be satisfactory for membership in His Kingdom. (from Strong's #2427)

- - Notice, though, that we do not "qualify" ourselves - instead, He "qualifies" us.

- - By implication then, the Father makes a deliberate selection - selecting exactly whom He will qualify from among all the living humans. (cf. Romans 8:29-30)

- - The Father also makes a deliberate choice - resolute that He is going to qualify each one of us individually that He has selected.

- - And, the Father takes a deliberate action - implementing the qualifying of each one of us individually.

- - This deliberate action is in addition to the deliberate actions He and the Son took about 2,000 years ago, by means of the cross, to provide a way for humans to become qualified. (v.14)

- - So, these activities of the Father to "qualify [us] to share in the inheritance of the saints" are on both a corporate level and an individualized level, past and present.

- - And, these activities of the Father are deliberately inclusive, to include each of us individually into the multitude of true believers or "saints" He is gathering in His "kingdom of light".

- - This inclusion of some humans into His kingdom is in sharp contrast to the exclusion that occurs for the vast majority of people, whom God bypasses - never to be selected and included into the "kingdom of light".

- - To be one of the select few or the "elect" that has been included into His kingdom is a very good reason to be "joyful" and "thankful". (2 Timothy 2:10; Colossians 1:12)

- - This joyfulness and thankfulness should be magnified when we contemplate that the Father could rightly take no action and simply allow each of us to incur the same fate

and resulting horrific punishment that the majority of the human race becomes locked into forever.

- - The Father also deliberately extends generosity - granting a "share" or "portion" of "the inheritance" that He has prepared to give to us true believers. (Strong's #3310)

- - By means of what the Father and the Son have done (vv.13-14), we true believers become beneficiaries to the blessings that flow from the Father and the Son, "in the kingdom of light".

- - Relating to this generosity, the Father also deliberately extends "grace" - granting us favor even though we do not deserve it. (vv.5-6; Ephesians 2:8-9)

- - Being sinners just like all of the other people in the world, we deserve eternal punishment for the sins we commit, just like they will receive. (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; cf. Matthew 8:11-12)

- - But in His generosity and from His extending us grace, the Father "lavishes" "the riches of His grace" "on us". (Ephesians 1:7-8)

- - To be one of the select few who receives God's grace and the lavishing of the riches of His grace is another very good reason to be "joyful" and "thankful".

- - Within these various aspects of the Father "qualifying" us, the Father furthermore makes us sinners into "saints" - "holy ones" that have been sanctified, or placed into the legal positional status of being comprehensively cleansed, thus being thereupon regarded as "morally pure, blameless, and consecrated" in His sight. (Strong's #0040)

- - As a 'sanctified one' or "saint", each of us true believers has been set apart and designated as dedicated for God's "sacred" purposes. (Strong's #0040)

- - In reality, the Father, in conjunction with the Son, take what is corrupted, reprehensible, and rejected, and "make" it into what is pure, valued, and accepted. (Strong's #2427)

- - To be one of the select few humans who undeservedly receives that legal positional status of now and hereafter being a 'sanctified one' is another very good reason to be "joyful" and "thankful".

BIG IDEA: God has worked in the past and continues to work in the present at blessing us who believe, for our future, which should generate in us ongoing gratitude and joy.

APPLICATIONS:

- - If you are a true believer, what should be your response to all of these blessings that God has and is bestowing on you? Joy and thanksgiving? Or instead, apathy and indifference?

- - Do you have spiritual joy in your life? If not, why is that? Is it because instead you only experience carnal joy - joy when you get some worldly or carnal object, pleasure, or gratification that you wanted for yourself?

- - During the times when you are "living a life worthy of the Lord" and "pleasing Him in every way", do you have spiritual joy then? Why do you suppose that is?

- - And conversely, during the times when you are not "living a life worthy of the Lord" and not "pleasing Him in every way", do you have spiritual joy then? Why do you suppose that is?

- - Do you thank God on a regular basis? Daily? If not, perhaps now would be a good time to insert and henceforth maintain a section of thanksgiving in your daily prayer devotional time.

- - From the teaching in this message, do you agree with the analysis about how the Father qualifies those humans who believe, even though all of us are undeserving? Or instead, do you think that you merit being qualified by God, that in some manner your goodness, religiousness, or heredity has earned you qualification with God "to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light"?

- - As a true believer or "saint", do you live a sanctified life - set apart and dedicated for God's holy purposes?

- - - - Or instead, are you living a sin-infested life that essentially disparages and exploits God's gracious blessing of qualifying you into His Kingdom?

- - - - Or perhaps, are you living a defeated life - you are trying hard to live sanctified but you cannot consistently establish and maintain victory over sins and strongholds in your life?

- - - - Where is the spiritual joy in living a sin-infested life, or a defeated life?

[Additional Lesson Questions to ponder (optional, if time allows):

- - Is it possible that there are significant aspects and/or elements of "the inheritance of the saints" that are not indicated, disclosed, or described in the Scriptures? For the present? For the eternal future? Discuss.

- - For those of us who are true believers, at the very moment that you first arrive before the throne of God in heaven, what do you think the first words out of your mouth will be? Discuss and speculate.]

Works Cited:

Bible. "The Holy Bible: New International Version." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

"Strong's Greek Dictionary." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

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