

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

AUG 31 - SEPT 4, 2020

Above All

8.30 - 11.22

BOOK OF COLOSSIANS



MONDAY

Colossians 1:12

A kingdom person is thankful.

“And giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of His holy people in the kingdom of light.”

—Paul (Colossians 1:12)

As a boy scout, I learned that a scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent (Boy Scout Law). Too bad they left out “a scout is thankful.” Here in Paul’s letter to the church at Colossae (and Laodicea), he says **a kingdom person is thankful**.

Paul is painting a word picture of what God’s kingdom is and how we live in it. Thankfulness is a key component. It is basic. It is foundational. Here he outlines things for which we can be thankful. Paul can hardly contain his excitement as he describes the kingdom life of a disciple.

The story is told of a missionary lady returning from years in China being asked what was the most important thing she learned while serving there. She replied, “To be thankful in and for everything” (see 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Ephesians 4:20). Here in Colossians, Paul mentions thankfulness at least once for each chapter in his letter (1:12; 2:7; 3:15; 4:2).

Ann Voscamp’s book on giving thanks and making lists of things to be thankful for has become a classic. Thankfulness turned her life around,

and her story has inspired many others to take up the life of thankfulness to the benefit of themselves, their households and their communities, and to the glory of God and His kingdom.

“Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

“Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Ephesians 4:20)

REFLECTION

Today make a list of 5 things you are thankful for. Then watch and see if it doesn’t transform your outlook and your world heavenward.

PRAYERS FOR SHEPHERD’S PANTRY

Pray for Shepherd’s Pantry, whose mission is to provide food, resources and services from a faith-based perspective to those in need.

TUESDAY

Colossians 1:13

A kingdom person is generous.

“For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves.” —Paul (Colossians 1:13)

Paul, in his epistle to the church at Colossae and to us, gives a whole list of what God does for us—all things we cannot help but be thankful for. God’s part in this is all inclusive. Our Father in heaven did not hold back in His **giving**. God is so giving, He gives us Himself.

1. God **gives** us all the wisdom and understanding we need (1:10).
2. God **strengthens** us in power (1:11).
3. God **qualifies** us to share in the inheritance of His holy people in the kingdom of light (1:12).
4. God **rescues** us **from** the dominion of darkness (1:13).
5. God **rescues** us **into** the kingdom of Jesus (1:13).
6. God **redeems** us (1:14).
7. God **forgives** us our sins (1:14).

Because God is so giving and because we are His children, we can afford to be generous, too. We cannot afford not to be generous.

The Bible gives us this picture in a lesson on geography. In Sunday School, we learned about the Sea of Galilee—a lake full of fish and full of life. Water comes in from the slopes of Mount Hermon and

flows out to the Jordan River. We can live like that, or we can be like the Dead Sea, where water flows in, but not out. God endorses this giving lifestyle. It is part of the path of righteousness He sets us on and leads us in.

*“**Give**, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” (Luke 6:48)*

“... God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.” (2 Corinthians 9:7-8)

QUESTIONS

What stories do you have of God being true to His promises?

PRAYERS FOR SHEPHERD’S PANTRY

Pray that Jesus would bring the right person to Shepherd’s Pantry for the new Operations Director job. Help the leadership team have the wisdom to know God’s will in this role and the future of the pantry.

WEDNESDAY

Colossians 1:10-11

A kingdom person is God-dependent.

“So that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please Him in every way; bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience.” —Paul (Colossians 1:10-11)

God does His part so that we may do our part. But still, our part is not separate from God’s part. God calls us into *partnership*. “He leads us in paths of **righteousness**” (Psalm 23:3). And we walk this path together.

These paths of righteousness may seem hard to walk on even after we have been made righteous by the blood of Jesus. But a kingdom person is a **seeking** person, and as Jesus’ disciples we are to **seek first God**, His kingdom, and His righteousness.

Peter Marshall was born in Scotland and became the Chaplain of the United States Senate (1947-1949) and the pastor of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C. (1937-1949). Years earlier, as he was leaving Scotland, his mother gave her son the verse, Matthew 6:33, “*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things [food & clothing] shall be added on to you, as well.*” This became a “life verse” for him to turn to again and again at points of decision in his life (where and when to move, who and when to marry, which pastoral calls to respond to and when). Peter Marshall was a “**God-dependent**” kingdom person.

Dallas Willard captured the ongoing assignment God has given us to seek Him. “Seeking is the key [emphasis added] to understanding how to enter into the kingdom of God and live there. One of the problems that many Christians today have is that since they are Christians, they have found it and they stop seeking. But seeking is the way we live.” (Willard)

QUESTIONS

Is seeking God and His righteousness “the way you live?” Let us ask our Senior Partner on this path He has set us on how to do this today.

PRAYERS FOR SHEPHERD’S PANTRY

Pray that those who are impacted by their reduction of unemployment benefits will find food at Shepherd’s Pantry. Pray that these people will know that God is providing this food and they can rest in Him.

THURSDAY

Colossians 1:13-14

A kingdom person is Christ-centered.

“For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” —Paul (Colossians 1:13-14)

Jesus invested everything of Himself to save us from sin and usher us into His kingdom—the kingdom of His Father. He died in our place and rose again so that we could have a heart transplant—get a new heart—and become a new person. We were born again—born anew. But Jesus did not leave us orphans. He left so He could send the Holy Spirit. But He also partners with us in our living *“a life worthy of Him and pleasing to Him in every way”* (1:10). How does Jesus partner with us?

Jesus fellowships with us; He teaches us; He abides in us (as we abide in Him); He disciplines and corrects us; He mediates the New Covenant.

Reuben Welch puts it this way: “As we walk forgiven and restored into the future, [Jesus] walks with us ministering the covenant. He is present with us on the journey, mediating and actualizing the grace and mercy we have received, being to us what a priest is—our sacrifice, brother, and intercessor. We are absolutely dependent upon His life and His work. Our victory is rooted in His continuing mediation of His once for all sacrifice for our sins.”

As I was working on this devo, I offended a Christian brother by finding fault in something he said. I didn't sleep well that night; and as I was reading the following morning, I had a strong impression that Jesus wanted me to "contend for unity" and not let my friendship go. I felt an urgency to phone this brother, confess my sin once again, ask forgiveness again, and "face the music." Our relationship was restored—maybe even strengthened. All of this was due to Jesus correcting my thinking. And it happened for our good.

"And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ."
(1 John 1:3)

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with Me."
(Revelation 3:20)

QUESTIONS

Jesus wants to partner with us. How are you partnering with Him in living His kingdom life today?

PRAYERS FOR SHEPHERD'S PANTRY

Pray that the re-opening of the Clothing Pantry at Shepherd's Pantry will go smoothly and that it will be a blessing to those in-need.

FRIDAY

Colossians 1:9

A kingdom person is Spirit-led.

“For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives.”

—Paul (Colossians 1:9)

How in heaven’s name is a person to live this life “*pleasing to God in every way,*” walking on “*paths of righteousness*” led by the Holy Spirit? Well, that’s precisely it—being partnered with the Holy Spirit. That was Jesus’ secret, and it is our secret, too.

Presbyterians believe that to be baptized in water is to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Some things about the Holy Spirit are controversial. But without controversy, we know the Holy Spirit is essential to kingdom living. Romans 8:14 says, “*For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.*”

He is called the **Holy** Spirit because He is **holy**. He is completely righteous. He is righteousness. His fruits are love, joy, peace patience, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

Jesus’ half-brother Jude wrote that we build ourselves up in our most holy faith by “praying in the Holy Spirit” (Jude 20). James, another half-brother of Jesus, wrote that a pilot steers his large ship by means of a small rudder. James likens the rudder of such a ship to the tongue. If the Holy Spirit is to be the Pilot of our lives, we need to give our tongues over to Him. James

asks, “Who can tame the tongue?” Even wild animals can be tamed, but not the tongue. Only God can tame our tongues. And He will if we give our tongues to Him (James 3:3-10).

To sum up this week: God has given us everything in order that we may please Him in everything we are and do, and so that we may join Him in His kingdom (starting now). God does not leave us “high and dry” to follow “do-it-yourself” instructions. He not only starts us off on the right path, He also walks with us (as we walk with Him) on that path. He is our Savior and our Senior Partner. For Him and for all of this, we are by faith joyfully **thankful**.

QUESTIONS

When you give the Holy Spirit your tongue in prayer, do you see how He steers the boat of your life in the right direction? He is the best Pilot.

PRAYERS FOR SHEPHERD’S PANTRY

Pray that Jesus continues to put a hedge of protection from the COVID-19 virus around the Shepherd’s Pantry volunteers.

Sources:

- Ann Voscamp, *One Thousand Gifts: A Dare to Live Fully Right Where You Are* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011).
- Catherine Marshall, *A Man Called Peter* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1941).
- Dallas Willard, *Living in Christ's Presence* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 71.
- Other sources for Thursday's devo include Ezekiel 36:26; Matthew 12:33; John 1:12-13; John 14:18; Hebrews 9:14-15
- Reuben Welch, *Faith for the Journey: A Bible Study in Hebrews* (Boise: Asbury Publishing, 1988), 111.

