

Yet there is a remnant, dear friends, a remnant which the Lord has set aside as His people, a remnant which are engaged in a war. One of the greatest questions today, aside from those already considered, is: "what is Christianity?" The normal answer, and the current opinion of today, is that Christianity is a group of people, collectively denying science, hateful toward other men, self-righteous hypocrites, and those who are holding back progress in society. Sound familiar? We hear it every day on the news, online videos, newspaper articles, from politicians, athletes, and from every day people. The issue today is that Christians, especially pseudo-Christians, in the name of the Christian faith, by their actions prove these many accusations to be true and accurate. Yet in order to dispel this notion today we will consider the true Christian experience, and come to a conclusion as to what the meaning of life is, and why people are put on earth. Let us do this according to our text for today which is found in the first chapter of Paul's epistle to the Colossians beginning at verse nine.

"For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."

Let us pray, O Lord Jesus Christ, we come before Thee today as a nation set aside, as Thy people on earth, and we are alone in this world. We feel pressure from all sides, we hear threats and rumors of plots against us. We are misrepresented daily, and we are anxious, frightened, and in distress. Therefore we pray unto Thee in our tribulation that Thou wouldst be with us in these dark times, cause us by Thy Spirit to be fruitful in every good work. Grant us strength to bear these burdens in faith. Give us patience in suffering. Help us to suffer long with those that oppose us and Thee. Grant these things unto us, O Lord, loving Thee because Thou didst first love us and gave Thyself as a ransom for all. Show unto us that in darkness Thou art our light which dispels it. Remind us that we are Thy redeemed children, bought back from sin, death, and the devil, and that therein we are forgiven for those many sins we have committed in Thy sight. Through these, O Lord, keep in our remembrance that if Thou art for us, who can be against us? Grant that the Gospel continue to be preached unto us, showing us that Thou hast loved us and thereby we love Thee and serve Thee. Grant unto us these gifts unto our end and show unto us our salvation in eternal light and truth, nevermore to be parted from Thee, and to live in everlasting righteousness, perfection and happiness. Grant us these things, O Christ, for the mercy and truth's sake. Amen.

Guided, then, by God's Spirit let us see that the true Christian experience is that:

- **We love Him.** We read verses nine through eleven of our text: *“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness.”* The apostle Paul, here, is speaking to the Colossian Christians, and this is an important point. He is not here addressing unbelievers, but converted men and women. Thus is he speaking to them as regards their walk, or lives, as Christians. For unbelievers, as we have seen, these words would be wholly inappropriate, for they cannot and will not do the things here exhorted by Paul. He here truly tells the Colossians that they should walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, but he is not here teaching salvation by the deeds of the Law, but they were already converted to faith, and are therefore already saved by virtue of that faith. He is here speaking to them as regards their Christian experience and shows them wherein their faith is made manifest to all, and that is in love toward God the Savior. Paul mentions a few things which are inherent in the Christian experience and the first of these is fruitfulness. Now this is a very general statement regarding the life of a Christian and it encompasses many things, which include fruitfulness of having children, fruitfulness in work, and the like. Now generally it is speaking of service toward God. This is manifest in two ways. The first is in humbly subjecting ourselves to the rule of God’s Word unto us. God’s Word is our guide in all things in this life, for doctrine, and all other things. We serve Him in worship and work for His name and His kingdom. And this leads to the second way, and that is to serve God by serving our neighbor. There is no greater way of serving our neighbor than to teach unto him the Word of God which converts him and saves him. However, we can serve our neighbor in many thousands of ways. It may be to help him in his bodily need with food, clothing and such things. It may be to toward you own children as a mother or father with their children. It may be that they need counseling, assurance, a friend, and all of those things in serving our neighbor we serve Christ Himself. Turning to the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 25, we read verses 31-40: **read passages here.**

Secondly Paul mentions strength according to the glorious power of God. This is the walk of the Christian for daily and hourly he is assaulted on all sides by the devil, the world, and his own flesh and needs strength in order to withstand these things. They come both as temptations to sin and as plots to destroy us in our bodies. Let us turn to Psalm 46 and read there verse 1-2: **read passage here.** God is our very Strength, for He upholds us and gives us the victory over these things, and therefore we need not fear anything that might happen to us. Thirdly now Paul mentions patience as something inherent in the Christian life. We need patience in suffering, patience in tribulation, patience in prayer, patient to wait for the deliverance of God both in regard to this life and eternal life. The day draws near, dear Christians, do not faint, but be patient and wait. Open now to Psalm 37, and we read verse 7: **read passage here.** Finally Paul mentions longsuffering. Now this is to suffer long with those who do you wrong, who persecute you and say all manner of evil against you because of the faith that is your

heart. Suffer with them, manifest unto them the grace of God in Christ, for like Paul himself, they may one day be saved from the power of darkness and be brought to the light of the glorious Gospel. Thus the true Christian experience is that we love Him:

Because He first loved us. We read verses nine through fourteen of our text: *“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”* Now the apostle gets to the heart of the matter and teaches wherein the motivation for this Christian life, and the cause of all the good works which we do and the love we have for God. It is comprehended and motivated by the things God has done for us, manifested by the sending of His Son into the flesh to reconcile mankind. The acts of love just mentioned, the fruitfulness, the strength, the patience, and the longsuffering are moved in us by the knowledge that God loved us. Let us now turn to the Gospel of John, chapter 3 and read there verses 14-17: **read passages here**. This is one of the most well known passages in the world, but also one of the most misused and misunderstood passages in all of Scripture. It teaches of God’s grace and faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, but it is quoted in such a manner very often that faith becomes a work man does rather than a gift of God by grace. These words show unto us wherein the love of God was shown unto us, in the giving of His Son into death, eternal and temporal, for us, in our place. Jesus once said that there is no greater love than that a man lay down His life for His friends, which is the very thing Jesus Christ did for all of us. Imagine for a moment the love which God has for us that it moved Him to take the place of His very enemies and pay the debt of sin that they owed to Him. It would be unthinkable for a bank or lender to assume the debt that their client owed to them and repay it to themselves on the clients behalf. But such is the very thing that God did for mankind. Mankind sinned, rebelled against God by His sin, became blind, dead, and enemies of God, and God then sent the second Person of Trinity, the Son of God or Jesus Christ, into the flesh of man to die for His enemies. It is the greatest love story ever told, it is the height of love to sacrifice one’s own life for the life of another, and is called sacrificial love. This is the kind of love God has toward us, toward all men. He died for all and offers the benefit of that death to all so that all might be saved.

Yet all of this means nothing unless we know what it is exactly that we have been saved from. Paul now mentions the first of three things that God’s love performed for us, though there are many more. The first is that because He loved He saved from darkness. Now this darkness is not the kind of darkness that we think of, though it is similar. Think of the darkest night you have ever experienced, or a time when you were in a

windowless room with the lights out and then comprehend that the darkness here spoken of is still darker than that. It is utterly black, so black it can be felt, for it is not darkness of the eyes, but darkness of the heart of which Paul speaks, it is spiritual darkness in which much of the world resides today. It is the heart that is still darkened by sin and death, which gropes about this world not knowing the meaning of life, trying to pry some meaning from work, from leisure, from sinful lust. In the end he finds nothing but further darkness, further blindness and is hopeless in that condition. This is the reason why conversion is often spoken as enlightenment. When the Word of God comes and convicts a man by the Law to a deep knowledge of his own sin and shame, his vile nature, and his unworthiness, and then comes and shows unto Christ in the Gospel, that soul goes from darkness to light, for he has been shown absolute truth. His eyes are open to sin and evil, as well as to righteousness.

Paul secondly speaks of redemption through the blood of Christ. Redemption means to buy back, to purchase, and this is done by Jesus' body given and His blood shed to pay the price of our sin. Salvation and faith are truly free for us, but they were not at all free. It cost a dear and precious price, the price of the blood and death of the Son of God Himself. Has there ever been love such as this? Paul finally mentions the forgiveness of sins, showing that therein is our redemption found. Jesus satisfied the wrath and justice of God in our behalf, God was satisfied with this payment and forgives the sins of all men for Christ's sake, which forgiveness is offered to all and worked in all through the Gospel.

This then is the motivation behind the Christian life. It is not that we are better than any other people, we do not deny science, we are not self-righteous, we are not holding back progress. Rather a Christian is like unto all other men with one exception, they are forgiven and redeemed by the blood of Christ, and this knowledge moves us to live as becometh Christians, bringing forth much fruit, patiently enduring all things, and suffering long with all men, for we are ever thankful for God's grace in Christ Jesus. In short we serve and love God because He first served and loved us. And now we have come full circle and can confidently answer the ultimate question which so often pagues mankind: "what is the meaning of life?" And "Why are we here?" Well, very simply the meaning of life is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and salvation of our soul and serve God with all our being. Any other answer comes short of this glorious and highest meaning and is insufficient. God is all in all, and the greatest fulfillment in a person's life is to be at one with Him, to dwell with Him evermore, to worship and serve Him for all eternity. Amen.