



Secure Freedom

*“All wicked actions are sin, but not every sin leads to death. We know that God’s children do not make a practice of sinning, for **God’s Son holds them securely, and the evil one cannot touch them.**”*

1 John 5:17-18 NLT

In Scripture, wickedness is often displayed as predetermined actions that go against the will of God, refusing to submit to His authority, or rejection of God. This is not what the life of a believer looks like. A believer does not go out of their way to sin, hurt others, or go against God’s will, and a believer is also one who walks submitted. When you are a believer living under His sonship, sin is no longer something that imprisons you. Rather, you are held securely by Jesus, the One who made it possible for you to walk in freedom from sin and death. But if you do slip up, because your heart already belongs to Him, the sensitivity of the Holy Spirit will rise up within you and you will find yourself becoming increasingly aware of sin.

And guess what? You don’t just mindlessly sin anymore. He has cleansed you! That is what the finished work of the cross does for those who choose Him, desire Him, and accept the reality of His sacrifice. This way you can really live a holy and righteous life. But you must remember that this comes with a cost. You must die every single day. Be dead to yourself and alive in Christ. Believe in His cleansing power every single day, desire His will, and love Him with all your heart.

Reflect

Are you living like someone who is truly held and free, or are you still acting like sin has power over you?



True Fellowship

*“And we know that the Son of God has come, and he has given us understanding so that we can know the true God. And now we live in fellowship with the true God because we live in fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ. **He is the only true God, and he is eternal life .**”*

1 John 5:20 NLT

The reason we are able to have understanding of this new nature is because Jesus came to die a death that nobody else was capable of dying, and through that action He showed a love so profound and everlasting, making it the standard that everyone is to live by if they want eternal life. When Christ accomplished this, it opened up the heavens so the Father could see Christ in you.

Now we had Someone worthy to plead our case of sin to the Father, and after forgiveness and reconciliation, we can have true fellowship with Jesus Christ our Lord. And we also know that fellowship with Christ means freedom from sin. Let us be grateful that Christ is our Lord.

Reflect

What does your daily life actually reveal about the depth of your fellowship with Christ?



Secure Union

*“So you must remain faithful to what you have been taught from the beginning. If you do, **you will remain in fellowship with the Son and with the Father .**”*

1 John 2:24 NLT

In order to be in perfect union with God the Father and His Son Jesus, you must remain obedient to the calling which is set before you. The calling is this: the death of yourself and living for Christ, remaining in a state of faithfulness, so that you have perfect fellowship with Him. And we know that fellowship with Christ means freedom from sin. He holds you in a secure union with Him and His Father, and the only thing you have to do is believe in this union, believe in the power that it holds, believe that the Spirit of Truth has really set you free, and has now secured you in His union.

When you allow the Holy Spirit to enter into your heart, Christ is the only thing that matters. He becomes your identity and when the Father sees you, He sees His Son. Be like His Son in this secure union and live out your purpose.

Reflect

Do you actually believe you are securely held in union with God, or are you still living like someone who has to earn their way back to Him?



Christ Within

*“Since we know that Christ is righteous, we also know that **all who do what is right are God’s children** .”*

1 John 2:29 NLT

Christ’s character can be exemplified in and through His children because of knowing Him through personal relationship. He is the standard set before us, perfection put into human flesh, placed on the cross for the whole world, so that we could live set apart and holy. And because of what He did, it is now possible to stand in the sight of the Father as a holy child of God and hear those words: “Well done, good and faithful servant.” All because of the Son, Jesus Christ.

Having spiritual knowledge that Christ is righteousness gives you the ability to see Christ within others, because we are all one family under the Sonship of Christ. And if we do what is good and righteous because of the relationship we have with Christ, then others will recognize the finished work that has been done within you. Live righteously.

Reflect

Are you allowing Christ within you to be so evident that other believers don’t have to guess if you’re a Christian, they just know?



Lovely Confidence

*“And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but **we can face him with confidence** because we live like Jesus here in this world.”*

1 John 4:17 NLT

Love, which is given by God, is already perfect, yet somehow it can become more perfect. How is that? Well, we are finite beings in a finite world, and there is no end to His love. His love will continue to grow in us as we continue to walk like Jesus. We will experience moments of tremendous glory and spiritual gifts, and we will have conversations with the Lord. And in the end, we should be able to look back on our life and have full confidence that we lived like Christ told us to live.

That should be the goal of every single believer, and the reward is heaven. This is the lifestyle we should be reflecting, which on the day of judgment will give us confidence. Thank God that there is no end to His love, and thank God that we get to experience the growth of this infinite love. We get to experience this love because Jesus modeled it for us. Live like Jesus and face God with confidence, because He is the One who gives life eternally.

Reflect

When you meet the end of your life will it be met with peace, and will you have peace knowing that you lived like Jesus?



The Reward, Christ

*“I have written to you who are God’s children because you know the Father. I have written to you who are mature in the faith because you know Christ, who existed from the beginning. I have written to you who are young in the faith because you are strong. God’s word lives in your hearts, and **you have won your battle with the evil one** .”*

1 John 2:14 NLT

No matter how mature you are in the faith, whether you are just starting out your walk or you’ve known Christ your whole life, the reward is the same: eternity with Him. Although you are at different points in your walks, you have both won the battle with the evil one. So you don’t have to wait until you are “mature enough” to walk in victory, because you have won the battle, and Jesus is the One who has won it all. Christ is your life, Christ is your identity, Christ is your God.

The assurance of victory and eternal life is the same at every stage, whether you’re on your deathbed accepting Jesus for the first time or you’ve gotten thousands of people to come to Christ. The reward is Jesus, and there is none greater. So no matter where you are in your walk with Christ, walk in His victory. He paid a great price for it, and He wants you to put on Christ. “Put on your new nature, created to be like God, truly righteous and holy.” (Ephesians 4:24)

Reflect

Do you believe that you are in an inadequate position to live in victory, or are you already living it out?



All About Freedom

“Anyone who continues to live in him will not sin. But anyone who keeps on sinning does not know him or understand who he is .”

1 John 3:6 NLT

This is what it means to be truly free from sin: all who abide in Him will not commit it, it is no longer a pattern. His grace was sufficient to forgive you of your sins, and now it gives you the same power that raised Christ from the dead to keep away from unrighteousness. Your identity is now secure in this promise with Christ. Christ is your identity, not sin. But if you continue to commit sin and live in a way that will disqualify you from entering into relationship with Christ, then you will not have eternal life. But the worst thing of all is you will not know Him. And if you do not know Him, then how can you be free from sinning?

You can't. So seek Him with all of your heart and all of your strength, and remember that His grace isn't a get out of jail free card (Romans 6:1-2), but rather, be exactly who He calls you to be. A light bearer, a child of God, in perfect fellowship with Him! He wants you to walk in the light, not walk in fear of what wrongs you might do in the future, because then you're doomed to fail and constantly ask yourself, "Why can't I just change?" Just ask Him for His eyesight, His ears, and His lips. He will change you completely from the inside, just as long as you are wanting Him every day.

Reflect

Is your freedom in Christ producing a changed life, or just a more comfortable version of your old one?



The Table of Jesus

“ See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world don’t recognize that we are God’s children because they don’t know him.”

1 John 3:1 NLT

The Father’s love is shown just by Him calling us His children, and this truth is where our identity is found. His love gives us the assurance that we need to know that we are His sons and daughters. The Creator of the universe recognizes each individual being that calls on Him as Lord as His child. Think of that. The Creator of everything loves you so much as to call you His child. There is no greater love than the One who created you and calls you His image-bearing child. The people who belong to the world don’t recognize us because they have no knowledge of Him, and the world doesn’t know the Father, so it won’t understand or see your identity as His child.

You may feel like an outsider to people who don’t know Christ, but that’s actually confirmation you belong to Him, not the world. Being free from sin means you are part of a different family, the family of God. Once you were apart from Christ, and we must be careful not to distance ourselves too far from the world, because then we will lose our witness. We don’t want to be closed off Christians. Jesus sat with sinners, so you should too. Be the light of the world.

Reflect

Do people around you see a closed off Christian, or do they see Jesus sitting at the table with them through you?



Our Atonement, Our Fellowship

*“Those who obey God’s commandments remain in fellowship with him, and he with them. **And we know he lives in us because the Spirit he gave us lives in us .”***

1 John 3:24 NLT

The Holy Spirit was given to us as a gift after Christ fulfilled the work on the cross. We can now receive the Holy Spirit and be in direct communication with the Father! The reason we are able to be in communication with the Father is because we are found in Him and He is in us, and the image of His Son is found in everyone who believes that Jesus is God, believes that Jesus is perfect, believes that Jesus lived, and believes they can have freedom in Christ, because His sacrifice was so great that it defeated and cut off the sinful flesh, which would otherwise be impossible to get rid of without Him.

Because He dwells in you, obedience is possible, and it’s possible without sacrifices on an altar or traditions. Jesus came to remove what we were capable of doing (burning animals on an altar) to complete a work that nobody else could ever complete, and then, if that wasn’t enough, He literally gives us Himself as a gift so that we are recognized by His Father. What a great sacrifice Christ made for us, so that we could be clean, washed white as snow, and made righteous.

Reflect

Do you communicate with the Father on a daily basis for strength, purity, and obedience?



Don't Solo It

*“We proclaim to you what we ourselves have actually seen and heard so that you may have fellowship with us. **And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ** . We are writing these things so that you may fully share our joy.”*

1 John 1:3-4 NLT

The Holy Spirit is present among believers who are in fellowship, and it's proclamations like the one John makes about Jesus that create this kind of fellowship in the first place. He is actively spreading the good news of Christ, and others want to experience what being in fellowship with Christ is all about. Now, being in fellowship with Christ doesn't mean you are required to hang out with other believers all the time, you need your alone time with Jesus. And your salvation certainly does not hinge on how much you are in fellowship with your Christian brothers and sisters. But one thing we must be careful of is making our relationship with Christ so personal that we only care about ourselves and how we and God are doing, instead of how others are doing too, which is why fellowship with other believers can be so vital in a lot of cases.

If two or three or more are gathered in the name of Jesus, the Holy Spirit is there with them. That presence isn't only reserved for private moments alone, it grows rapidly when believers show up for each other and spur each other on in love and good deeds. If you are distant from community because someone hurt you in the past by not living up to the standard of Christ, be encouraged not to let their failure keep you from sharing in this great joy. Watch what happens when you let Jesus work through other people, and the joy that you all share together in the Holy Spirit. You will receive so many amazing things. You will have the opportunity to pour into others, which is fulfilling enough in and of itself, and others will pour into you. Be a disciple.

Reflect

Is your walk with Christ so private that no one else benefits from it?



Reborn & Restored

“If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts.”

1 John 1:10 NLT

Claiming that you have never sinned, or that you were guiltless before coming into union with Christ, makes it impossible for you to accept the gift of salvation that God has set up as an invitation for you and me to be freed from sin and death. If you deny this invitation and believe you are pure without it, you are calling God a liar by doing so. His word can have no place in the heart of someone who thinks they are blameless without Christ being the Lord of their life. There is an emptiness in every heart that only the Word can fill. But if you believe your own motives, practices, and beliefs have already filled that space, and that you’ve never sinned, then there is no room left for the Word to enter.

“For I was born a sinner, yes, from the moment my mother conceived me” (Psalm 51:5 NLT). So when you say, “I’m good on my own and I don’t sin,” what you are suggesting is that salvation is obsolete in comparison to what you believe. Since we are born into sin, what must happen? We must be reborn and restored back to our former glory. And there is a man who showed us how to do it. His name is Jesus. The Son of God.

Reflect

Are you living a lifestyle of being reborn, or staying dead in your sin?



Just as He Is

*“Dear friends, we are already God’s children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, **for we will see him as he really is**. And all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure.”*

1 John 3:2-3 NLT

The thing that keeps us going in our faith is His amazing and compelling nature. He also gives us a name that we do not know yet, but one day, when we get to heaven, He will reveal it to us (Revelation 2:17). But now, as we’re living on earth, we have a secure identity in Him as we eagerly expect what is to come. For this very reason we keep ourselves pure, because we want to be a bride that is prepared, holy, and beautiful. The world and all the evil in it are looking for an easy way out, something instantly gratifying, constantly seeking to satisfy themselves, only to find they’ll need it again and again, because the world is devoid of the love of God. Having eager expectation, and waiting patiently upon the Lord, knowing that He has taken care of you despite what the world believes is right, is what drives us to become pure, just as He is pure.

Notice this passage doesn’t say you need to white-knuckle your faith, struggle your way through life, and dread living on earth. No. Be excited. Be joyful. Be thankful. Be patient about the things of the Lord and what He wants to do in your life, and do not lose sight of Him. Seeing Christ for who He is, once we are face-to-face with Him in heaven, will transform us into His likeness in a single instant. There is no more cutting off of your flesh, taking the advice of a pastor, or hearing an inspiring sermon, because you are literally looking at the essence of glory and perfection itself, and that is what you become as you gaze upon the Holy One. What once was something you could not see, yet had faith in, is now your entire existence.

Reflect

Does your purity reflect how faithful you are willing to be unto God, so that others can see what purity looks like?



The Glory He Restored

“And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us. Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.”

1 John 4:13-14 NLT

The way we know we are in God, and that He is in us, is because the Holy Spirit confirms it by being in control of our lives, persuading our decisions, urging us to pray, interceding for us in prayer, and fighting the spiritual battles that rage against us. If you see someone, or see it in yourself, living in a state of gratitude, patience, kindness, faithfulness, and holiness, this is how you know who you belong to, or who somebody else belongs to. You know people by their fruit. In other words, you know whether or not the Holy Spirit is alive and active within somebody if God has given you the ability to discern that. Jesus was seen by all the disciples who were close to Him, and because Jesus was seen and they followed Him, they believed in His power, not only because He did physical miracles that were documented, but because of who He was.

Jesus was the perfect person, God in the flesh, who came to restore the glory that had been destroyed by Adam and Eve because of their sin. Jesus is no longer here in physical form, He has now made His residence in you, and He sits at the right hand of the Father. Now that He dwells in you, others can testify and see Christ in you. They can see the healing power in you, the resurrection power, because the same power that raised Christ from the dead lives in you.

Reflect

Is your life worth living because you're living it for Christ, or is it worth living because you're living it for yourself?



Assurance & Identity

“And we can be sure that we know him if we obey his commandments .”

1 John 2:3 NLT

Having assurance that you know God and belong to Him comes from a life lived following Him and obeying His word. So if you ever question whether you are saved, or think that maybe you aren't doing good enough, keep in mind that true assurance is found in the work of Christ, and that He has robbed the grave you once lived in. Ask yourself a genuine question: does my life reflect Christlikeness? If you are humble enough to even ask yourself this question, it shows that you care, that you are closer than you think, and that you really do belong to Him. The evil one wants you to believe that you are still the old, yucky you, but you belong to Christ if you have chosen to believe in Him.

The enemy's whole purpose is to destroy the reality of Christ in your life. Sin, which was born through Satan, pulls you away from the way God intended you to be. That is the nature of sin, and it has dominion over the earth. You are born into an earth full of sin, so you must be reborn. And as long as you belong to the earth, you belong to the evil one, and sin's byproduct is death. Sin will always try to take out your identity and damn you, but Christ has restored it. He is the Victor. We are made to bear the image of God, defeat death through the power of Christ, and live in freedom. Have assurance. Remain humble. Stay obedient.

Reflect

Do you rely on the assurance of Christ, or do you let the enemy pull you away from your true identity?



The Eternal Promise

“And in this fellowship we enjoy the eternal life he promised us .”

1 John 2:25 NLT

We are so blessed to be surrounded by the fellowship of God in a world that is so dark. It is the promise of promises. Nothing can hinder it, nothing can stand in its way, and it will always prevail. God cannot break promises, God cannot lie, and God can do no wrong. This is why His promises are so good in a world that is so depraved. His promises really stand out in a world that can also make promises, but the difference is His promises are eternal, unconditional, and perfect. The promises of the world are only temporary, and they fade away once you die.

The only thing the world ever really promised you was death and eternal separation from God. A world run by Satan is a world run by sin and death. That is why we must be set apart from it. Holy. This promise of eternal life is something that cannot be taken from you if you choose to live by His Spirit daily. Satan has lost, and he is going to try to bring down as many people as he possibly can. Be an example to others, and show them the promises of God, so that they don't have to go down to the pit.

Reflect

Do the world's fading promises still tempt you, even though you know how they end?



Faith Alone

“I am writing to you who are God’s children because your sins have been forgiven through Jesus. I am writing to you who are mature in the faith because you know Christ, who existed from the beginning . I am writing to you who are young in the faith because you have won your battle with the evil one.”

1 John 2:12-13 NLT

John is making it abundantly clear in this passage that no matter where you are in your walk, just the fact that you have chosen Christ means you have won your battle with the evil one. Victory is possible for somebody who is literal seconds from death. Whether someone is on their deathbed or has just been hit by a car, the moment before they die, if they can humble their hearts, even though they didn’t live a life for Christ, He will still accept them. Victory is not reserved only for the mature, because He paid the highest price. But it has to be genuine, not just a prayer out of fear. This is why works alone can’t save you. Works are merely a shadow of the victory Christ brought when He defeated death. The mature in the faith have to be careful not to become comfortable with where they are, and just take a back seat and think they’ve advanced enough.

God is eternal, and it is impossible to fully comprehend His glory. We are eternal beings inside of flesh and time. This is a wonderful blessing, because it shows that He is worth living for and knowing about. He doesn’t have a limited number of things to learn about Him, because the things of God are infinite and amazing. The deeper you dive, the more your love grows for Him, and the more your mind becomes filled with the things of heaven. So just because somebody on their deathbed can have the same reward as someone mature in the faith does not give license to the mature in the faith to just sit back and relax. It should spur them on even more to learn about God’s love, because how amazing is it that God will accept somebody who is moments from death? Pursue Him with all your heart. Don’t get comfortable. Keep the flames of holy passion burning.

Reflect

Does knowing salvation isn’t earned make you complacent, or does it spur you to pursue Him more?



Sons and Daughters

*“And who is a liar? Anyone who says that Jesus is not the Christ. **Anyone who denies the Father and the Son is an antichrist** . Anyone who denies the Son doesn’t have the Father, either. But anyone who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.”*

1 John 2:22-23 NLT

The term “antichrist” isn’t simply used to describe someone who lives in a state of unbelief, but denial. This denial is rooted in a sense of pride and arrogance, but most of all, fear. Fear to submit to the Most High. This fear is also rooted in an unwillingness to be obedient. One who lives in denial can also be someone who says, “Lord, Lord,” but lives a life indulging in sin. They lack reverence and respect for what Jesus did to set them free from death. The Father does not have a personal relationship with anyone who denies His Son. But if the Son lives inside a person who believes in Him, the Father sees that. Even more so, He sees His Son within that person, and it is this that justifies them in His sight. A believer who lives a confident life in Christ knows they’ve been justified in His sight, and their life actually reflects the work of the cross.

But those who treat the work of the cross as a license to keep on sinning, which is commonly labeled a “slip up,” just keep on asking for forgiveness. Oh, but this is what God’s grace is for, right? All lies. If you live like this, you are taking the power of the Spirit for granted, and you are spitting on His name. His grace is power, and it gives you the tools to stomp out what used to chain you down. Sin’s power is crushed under the power of the Spirit. His power eliminates every antichrist spirit, and since this is what His Word teaches us, then why do you tell yourself that it’s okay because “we’re only human”? You are much more than a piece of flesh. You are His child. His daughter. His son. Made to be His.

Reflect

Does every second of your life look like the transformation of Christ, or the complacency of sin with the benefit of clearing a guilty conscience?



Shame Expelled

*“And now, dear children, remain in fellowship with Christ so that when he returns, **you will be full of courage and not shrink back from him in shame** .”*

1 John 2:28 NLT

If we abide in Christ as though His coming could happen at any second, we will have no shame when He arrives. Instead, we will stand in confidence, because the work of Christ is the absolute center of our lives. If Christ is the center of your life, then it should look different, not just merely saying you serve God, but how you serve God, and nothing should ever be done out of selfish conceit. Christ should be your reason for living, your identity, your passion, your purpose, and your life, if you claim Him. So look at your own life right now. Does it look like Christ's? Does it look like how He said it should? Does your love for Him define who you are and how you live? If you can be confident in these things because He has given you true assurance, and you can honestly say, “Yes, Jesus, You really are Lord of my life,” then shame has no place.

The thing that becomes condemned is shame. There is no condemnation or shame in the life of those whose lives are hidden in Christ Jesus. The enemy's goal is to distort your identity in Christ and make you a slave to shame. This is why our assurance in who we are as God's children remains grounded in who Christ is, and not in what we have done to obtain holiness, but in what Christ has done to make us holy. Our own attempts to be holy apart from Christ will always have fault, which is why the enemy can leverage it for his own gain. Live out the freedom that Christ has already set out for you. He did it on the cross so you wouldn't have to.

Reflect

If Christ came right now, would shame overwhelm you, or would the grace of God which gives you confidence overwhelm you?



Christ Our Answer

*“And we are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases him. And since we know he hears us when we make our requests, **we also know that he will give us what we ask for.**”*

1 John 5:14-15 NLT

God is most certainly not a vending machine that you go to when it's convenient. If you are living your life out for Christ, and you are actually aligned with His will, you will ask for things according to that alignment as well, leaving your selfish desires out of it, because now that you have the newness of life, your desires become aligned with Christ's desires. This isn't to say that you can't ask for a new job, a new car, or a house. The real requests you should be making to God are things that actually benefit the kingdom of God. So ask yourself the question: do the requests I make known to God align with His will, or only with what I want? If you cannot confidently say that the things you ask for glorify the kingdom of God, then you should not ask for them. In the heart of the believer, one who professes that Christ is Lord, God has instilled new desires that make you feel whole, leaving you without need of anything or anybody else for satisfaction, validation, money, and so on.

He is your satisfaction. He is your fulfillment. He is your life. And because He has instilled new life within you, along with it, new desires come into your heart, so that you can work to please Him and gain true fulfillment and joy. Since this is what the believer has experienced, and this is how we are told to live, then we should only ask for things geared toward building His kingdom further. Ask for His strength, ask for His love, ask for His patience, ask for His kindness, ask for His joy, ask for His fulfillment. He will give you these things in ways you never would have seen coming. And don't ask for them out of fear either, ask for them because you have a true, genuine desire to walk like Him. If you ask to simply be like Him, as He has commanded us, the results are without disappointment.

Reflect

Have you allowed God to come into your life in such a way that it births new desire within your heart, or are you still asking for things that don't matter?



Firm Belief

*“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, **that you may know that you have eternal life** , and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”*

1 John 5:13 NKJV

Eternal life isn't just some vague or abstract hope if you are a child of God. Eternal life is yours because He commands that it is. What it means to be a child of God is to continue believing in Him, to follow and obey His word, and to always stay faithful to His promises. But it must be rooted in something deeper than simply having knowledge and simply saying, “I believe.” If you claim to be a believer, do not let your belief come only from words, but rather from the fruit that you bear, because of the marvelous work He has done in you, in order for you to be known as a child of God. If you are a child of God, then you must live it out, because of love. When knowledge of God and belief in Him are both genuine and firmly rooted, it is evident that love is the cause of these two things. The difference is obvious between someone who has knowledge and belief because they have love, and someone who has knowledge and belief only to perform.

Everything we know and believe about God stems from how much we love Him. Having head knowledge is not a true indicator that you love Him, it can sometimes mean the complete opposite. Knowledge, when detached from love, becomes a weapon. It gets used to win arguments, to leverage Scripture for personal gain, or to take advantage of someone, rather than being used to glorify God. Don't learn simply to perform, like the Pharisees did. If we have no love, we have nothing. We can't firmly believe in God and continue to want to know more about Him for His glory alone if we don't love Him like we should. Firm belief isn't even rooted in the belief itself, it's found in getting to the point where you recognize that there is something greater than you, and His name is Jesus. The day you set yourself aside and put Christ above yourself is the day you proclaim your love for Him. Real love always is, and always will be, the picture of selflessness.

Reflect

Do you learn about God because you truly love Him and actually want to know Him, or do you only want to learn so you can benefit yourself?



Grace & Peace

*“We are writing to God’s holy people in the city of Colosse, who are faithful brothers and sisters in Christ. **May God our Father give you grace and peace .**”*

Colossians 1:2 NLT

The city of Colosse was quite a small and irrelevant town, overshadowed by its neighbors. Although it was a small city, Paul calls the people of Colosse “holy.” To this city, Paul uses some of the most highly exalted language found in Scripture. This should tell us something. No matter how small, unpopular, or obscure you might be, the words Paul uses to describe the city of Colosse are the same for you and all of God’s holy people, the ones who believe in Him. The very fact that the Colossians are seen by God actually makes them anything but obscure, because they are recognized by the Most High. There is no greater recognition than this. The word “holy” is used to describe a follower of Jesus, which sets you apart from the world. Whatever standards the world has set for you, remember who the world is really run by.

Even if you are seen as obscure in the eyes of the world, or seen as unimportant, remember who you actually belong to. You belong to God, so do you really want to live by the ways of a world that is controlled by Satan? You cannot be set apart in a world that is evil if you conform to it. You belong to, and are recognized by, God. Not only are you recognized by God individually, but as an added benefit, you are now part of the family of God, and you are able to have fellowship with others who believe in Jesus. You will have new conversations, new interests, new desires, because they are all centered around what matters most, which is Christ our Lord. After becoming part of the family of God, peace is among you and those you commune with and have fellowship with. But this peace is not without grace, because grace is the bridge to every good virtue. Grace is power. Grace is the means to defeat sin and death. Grace is love. God is grace.

Reflect

Do you rely on what God thinks of you and what His standards are, more than what the world says your standards should be or who the world thinks you are?



Rescued & Free

“For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.”

Colossians 1:13-14 NLT

Our freedom is purchased by Jesus because He waged war against hell by defeating death through a willful sacrifice. There's a lot of debate about who killed Jesus, and it makes sense, since we want to defend our Lord. But in reality, nobody killed Jesus. Though many wanted Him dead, it was Jesus who gave His life willfully. He did it all out of love. Who knew that an act of love was actually an act of war for the souls of mankind? Through His sacrifice, we have atonement for sin, and this atonement is rooted in the war that Christ waged against hell. He tore the gates off their hinges, thus draining hell of its power. Hell has no more strive, just straight up demise. Yes, hell still has dominion over the world, but it has no dominion over those who are called into Christ's union.

Thank God that we are forgiven because of what Jesus did, but even more so that we are free indeed. Jesus did not die only so that you could have an easier way to be forgiven. If we think that's all His death was for, we go against what Romans 6 says without even knowing it. Romans 6 asks a rhetorical question, possibly the most important one of all, which states: shall we continue to live in sin so that grace may abound? Certainly not! Grace isn't a loophole. Don't twist Christ's sacrifice into an easier path toward sin, one you don't even realize you're walking. Christ's sacrifice was made specifically so that you could use His grace to become free from sin, not merely to clear a guilty conscience caused by the flesh. Remember He waged war so that you could have freedom. He waged war so you could love like Him. He waged war so you could make peace like Him. He waged war because He loves you.

Reflect

Do you actually believe Jesus willfully gave His life, or do you still frame His death as something done to Him?



Partakers of Fullness

“For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ , and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross.”

Colossians 1:19-20 NLT

The entire fullness of God lived in Christ. That much is undoubtedly true. Because that fullness dwelled within Jesus, everything could be reconciled through Him. This reconciliation was made possible only through His death, burial, and resurrection, the very work that allows the Father to see Christ within us. Nothing needed to be added to Christ during His time on Earth; He was born worthy. As Paul declares in this passage, the fullness of God lived in Christ. The fullness of God isn't just a part of Jesus, the fullness of God is Jesus. The most amazing part about all of this is the fact that He didn't tolerate living in and among flesh; He took joy in it because He knew what had to be fulfilled. The same joy that God had when He inhabited Christ's body is shared with us. Because of His joy, He made us to be partakers of His divine nature. Being a partaker means that you have been blessed by the power of His grace to live set apart from sin.

First, the Lord dwelled within something perfect to display to the whole world what a blameless life looks like. In all of His fullness, God made Jesus the example of perfect living. He then died a death fit for a criminal, taking on the entire weight of sin, being condemned in the flesh by it. Then He rose up from the dead, and as a gift, we get to share this power. Nothing Jesus did was abstract. Everything He came to fulfill became reality for His children because He is supposed to be our life if we claim Him to be ours. Just as the fullness of God dwelt in Jesus, it now also dwells in us. The image of God was restored through the life of Jesus, and Jesus is the fulfillment. He is the remedy for a renewed life. One that is set apart from the world. This means you aren't doing what once quickly gratified your flesh. One that is dedicated to God doesn't need to grant their flesh attention. The one that is truly devoted is one that loves God so much that, when the flesh rears its ugly head, the Spirit which raised Christ from the dead squashes the temptations of it. Wanting what He wants will set you free. Trying to just “be less sinful” only throws you right back into it. The goal was always just to be like Christ and nothing else.

Reflect

Are you settling for being less like your old self, or are you actually partaking in the fullness of Christ today?



Christ Who Is Your Life

“ God has given me the responsibility of serving his church by proclaiming his entire message to you.”

Colossians 1:25 NLT

We should take Paul's example and the way he was driven to spread the good news and apply it to our own lives. Paul lived in a way that served everyone but himself. Selflessly. Do you serve at church expecting something in return? Do you serve in your home expecting something in return? Do you serve above and beyond at work and expect a pay raise? Most importantly, do you serve expecting only to be seen by God for good works done in secret? Good works done in secret prove true faith and true selflessness. If you are only doing good works to benefit your social image, you are no better than the Pharisees, and your faith produces pride and dishonesty instead of humility and integrity. Works done in secret produce the most precious fruit because of their rarity. Works done in secret please the Lord because they prove that you value His recognition more than human attention.

It's so important to take the great example Paul left when he served the church and apply it to every part of our lives. His only purpose was to serve God and others. We can make excuses all day and say things like “I'll never be.” Says who? You? Sometimes we deceive ourselves with foolish thoughts like, 'I'm only human,' 'I don't feel good enough,' or 'I'm nothing more than a sinner.' Paul tells us to imitate him as he imitates Christ. The only way you will fall short of that command is if you set up your own stumbling block of doubt. Christ has given you the power that raised Himself from the dead to live like Him. This power is in our everyday lives, and you must choose to live in it (Romans 8:2). The power of the Spirit gives life, and the grip of the flesh produces death. Do not take His power for granted, or take lightly what He has given you. If it is for you, then who are you to say that it's not? If you believe you aren't capable of living like Christ, you're already doomed to fail at living victoriously. Satan and his demons rejoice when you treat your salvation as an addition to your life rather than letting your salvation be your life. Take up the yoke of Christ with strength. Take up the yoke of Christ with confidence. Take up the yoke of Christ with integrity. Take up the yoke of Christ with ownership.

Reflect

What is stopping you from living a fearless, confidence-filled, victorious life?