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Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

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## **Paul's Prayers for the Colossians**

### **Colossians 1:1-14**

Series Introduction: Rooted and Built-up in Christ

***Colossians 2:6-7 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, <sup>7</sup>rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.***

On the night of December 4-5, 2002, North Carolina experienced one of the worst ice storms in history...over 2 million acres of trees were affected, resulting in almost half a billion dollars' worth of damage to the trees... 75% of the trees severely affected by the storm were pine trees, most of them loblolly pines

These trees had very heavy ice build-ups coupled with a very shallow root system... the wet ground added insult to injury and these trees just came toppling down, one after the other

At about 2 in the morning, hearing the sounds of trees crashing down, I took my flashlight and foolishly ventured out into my yard... It was one of the most terrifying night walks I ever took... like a war zone as literally tons of pine wood was crashing down to the ground around me... I soon scurried back into the relative safety of my home, and moved my children downstairs to our den where they would be protected better from falling trees

For the next four months, cleanup crews worked in our region to remove the debris caused by these uprooted trees

As I looked over the damage in my own yard, I could see the shallow roots of one loblolly pine after another, ripped up by the toppling of the tree

And as I read Colossians 2:6-7 I have an image in my mind I can never remove... of a huge tree toppled because of an inadequate root system

Colossians 2:6-7 speaks of being ROOTED and BUILT UP in Christ

Our purpose over these six sessions in the book of Colossians is to do precisely that... to root ourselves BACK into Christ for the purpose of maximum glory to God, maximum joy and thankfulness for us, and maximum fruitfulness for our ministries

The Book of Colossians is a timeless tribute to the Supremacy of Christ, and to the Sufficiency of the Gospel for all things

It is a book which urges us to exercise extreme caution in the area of philosophy and asceticism...

It is a book which gives of a sweet aroma of a happy, fruitful, productive, powerful life in Christ

Background:

The author of the letter is Paul, the Apostle of Christ

***Colossians 1:1-2 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, <sup>2</sup> To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse: Grace and peace to you from God our Father.***

He is writing to a church he's never visited before, a church he did not plant

Colossae was a city in Asia Minor, what is currently Turkey

It was located in the region of Phrygia, in the Roman province of Asia

With nearby Laodicea and Hierapolis, it was part of a triad of cities in the Lycus Valley, about 100 miles east of Ephesus, built on the Lycus River

Colossae was already a great city when the Persian King Xerxes (the same Ahasueras of the Book of Esther) marched through it in 481 B.C. Because of its strategic location at the junction of some major trade routes running east to Ephesus and north to Pergamos, it became important for a period of time. But the Romans redirected the trade routes and Colossae shrank in its importance. By the time Paul wrote to this church, Colossae was greatly overshadowed by Laodicea and Hierapolis. Largely abandoned by the eighth century after Christ, it was totally destroyed in the twelfth century. Now it is completely abandoned ... the site has never been built on again.

The population was predominantly Gentile, but there was a sizeable Jewish community as well. Thus the church at Colossae had to face doctrinal challenges from both Jewish legalism and Gentile pagan philosophy

The church itself was planted by Epaphras, and in Colossians 2:1, Paul makes it plain he'd never seen them before

But by the time he was writing, the church was already in a battle for its doctrinal life. A serious heresy had arisen in the region, and Epaphras went to Paul to tell him of the danger to the church. It had not yet been infected by this heresy, but trouble was coming

Certainly, the old pagan way of life was tempting enough... and so also was the threat of Jewish asceticism and legalism. But even bigger was the threat of a mixture of Greek philosophy with Christianity, a mix that later came to be called Gnosticism

According to this philosophy, God was good but physical matter was evil. Because a good God was pure spirit, he could not have created the physical world, but it resulted from emanations from the all-powerful God, evil spiritual beings called *demiurges*

According to this heresy, Christ himself was a good emanation from God, but NOT God Himself and not a human being... and the heresy denied the sufficiency of the work of Christ on the cross... they needed specialized KNOWLEDGE in order to be saved from the evil physical world

Mixed in with this mess was Jewish legalism... the requirement to keep special religious laws, dietary laws, and religious festivals.

Paul's primary hope for rescuing the Colossian church is RIGHT DOCTRINE... about God, about Christ, about the gospel, about the Christian life

And hence he wrote this glorious epistle

Paul's parallel hope for rescuing the Colossian church is FAITH-FILLED PRAYER

And that's where we begin today

#### Sermon Introduction: Paul's Prayer Life

- The Delight of Paul's Prayer Life: Thankfulness for Grace (vs. 1-8)
- The Goal of Paul's Prayer Life: A Lifestyle of Persistent Fruitfulness (vs. 9-11)
- The Ground of Paul's Prayer Life: Christ's Work of Redemption (vs. 12-14)

#### I. The Delight of Paul's Prayer Life: Thankfulness for Grace (vs. 1-8)

***Colossians 1:3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you***

A. Thanklessness a Great Sin; Thankfulness a Great Grace

1. Essential to our worldview: everything in this universe belongs to God

***Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.***

***Romans 11:36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.***

2. A thankless spirit is therefore a great affront to God, the Creator and Ruler of all things

***Romans 1:21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.***

Isn't it amazing that, as Paul lists the great sins of the human race in Romans 1: idolatry, sexual immorality, and all manner of wickedness, he mentions THANKLESSNESS as one of the greatest sins

3. We show our theology by our thankfulness!! Paul saturated his prayer life with thanksgiving
4. It is one of the greatest graces in the Christian life... a thankful spirit

***Psalm 103:1-5 Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. <sup>2</sup> Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits-- <sup>3</sup> who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, <sup>4</sup> who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, <sup>5</sup> who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.***

- a. Thankfulness is the remedy to complaining
  - b. It is a delightful disposition of the soul
  - c. I LOVE to be around thankful people
5. It is also essential to the Advance of the Gospel

***Psalm 105:1 Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done.***

6. Paul will mention it prominently throughout this letter

***Colossians 1:11-12 joyfully <sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.***

***Colossians 2:7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.***

***Colossians 3:15-17 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.***

B. Whom Paul Thanks: God the Father

***Colossians 1:3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you***

1. Paul's prayer life is CONSTANT and it is CONSTANTLY SATURATED in thankfulness
2. Whom does Paul thank? God the Father
3. Specifically, the "God, the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ."
4. Remember that Christ was completely FATHER-CENTERED in His ministry
  - a. It was the Father who sent His Only Begotten Son into the world
  - b. Christ came to reveal the Father to us
  - c. He came to do His Father's will
  - d. Christ prayed constantly to His Father
  - e. He died to bring us to the Father
  - f. In the end, Christ will wrap up the entire universe as head over all things and give it back to the Father who created it
  - g. So therefore, it is right for Paul to thank the Father for the Colossians' salvation
5. Again, note that whom we thank shows whom we think is responsible

On Christmas day, if your wife gives you a beautiful sweater, it would be odd for you to turn to your mother and thank her... it will also get you into trouble with your wife

BAD IDEA!!

No, we thank the one we think is responsible

And He is about to thank the Father for the Colossian's FAITH in Christ

Amazing... but it makes sense: our FAITH ITSELF is a DIRECT GIFT from Almighty God

***Ephesians 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--<sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast.***

***Romans 6:17 But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted.***

God is sovereign over our faith and obedience, and therefore He deserves to be thanked for it

### C. What Paul Thanks God For: Grace

Paul gives thanks to God for His supernatural work of grace in the lives of the Colossian Christians

Many of you can testify to that kind of thankfulness as well...

To give God all the thanks and praise for His work in Central and Eastern Europe

To give God all the thanks and praise that over 2000 Udmurt people have come to Christ, turning away from ancestor worship and pagan worship of the woodlands to a living relationship with Christ

To realize that the hope for all of CEE is an ongoing prayer assault on the Satanic strongholds that have kept people bound in darkness for centuries

So Paul gives thanks to God for GRACE... the Grace of the Gospel

***Colossians 1:3-6 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, <sup>4</sup> because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints-- <sup>5</sup> the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel <sup>6</sup> that has come to you.***

#### 1. Four-fold Evidence of Grace

##### a. Faith in Christ Jesus (vs. 4)

- i) A deep sense that only Christ can save them
- ii) A conviction that Christ is GOD in the flesh
- iii) A confidence that Christ's blood, shed on the cross is sufficient for ALL their sins

##### b. Love for all the saints (vs. 4)

- i) A strong sense of identity and unity in the Spirit with other Christians
- ii) We KNOW that we are part of the family of God
- iii) The indwelling Spirit makes us ONE as the Father and the Son are one
- iv) Love for other Christians is CLEAR PROOF of the transforming power of the gospel

***John 13:35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."***

***1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death.***

- c. Hope in heaven (vs. 5)
- d. Growing fruitfulness
- 2. Means of Grace
  - a. The Gospel message: the word of truth
  - b. The hearing of the Gospel
  - c. The Gospel that bears fruit all over the world
- 3. Messenger of God's Grace: Epaphras

## II. The Goal of Paul's Prayer Life: A Lifestyle of Persistent Fruitfulness (vs. 9-12)

***Colossians 1:9-11 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. <sup>10</sup> And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, <sup>11</sup> being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father***

### A. How Paul Prays: Constancy

- 1. Constancy
  - a. It is absolutely astonishing how consistent Paul is in his prayer life
  - b. We are so easily discouraged, especially in prayer

***Luke 18:1 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.***

[Then follows the parable of the Persistent Widow]

- c. Paul sets the example:

***vs. 9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you***

## 2. Specificity

- a. Paul always has a very clear idea of WHAT to pray for
- b. MAKE A STUDY OF THIS!!! Go through Paul's letters and learn what he prays for
- c. Too often our prayers are either not specific or not really eternally significant

Either: "God bless the world and everyone in it" OR "God please heal grandma's sore leg."

Better: "God, please move us to so cherish your glory that we will be willing to sacrifice our time, energy and money to advance your kingdom and bless lost people with the gospel."

OR "God please strengthen grandma while she suffers from a sore leg to glorify you and not murmur against you, to witness to her nurses and doctors, to wait patiently until you heal her, and to learn whatever lessons you have for her to learn."

## SPECIFICALLY SPIRITUAL

### 3. Purpose

***vs. 10 And we pray this in order that...***

- a. Paul always has a purpose in mind in his prayers
- b. Verse 10 begins with an infinitive of purpose... "to" or "so that"
- c. He knows what he is aiming for... and those purposes come from what God has revealed to him about His eternal purposes in Christ
- d. Saturate your prayer life with a strong sense of God's purposes in salvation
- e. Studying what Paul prays for is a strong way to become purposeful in your prayers
- f. Suggestion: Take the list he gives here and pray them for ten people in your church

## B. What Paul Prays For

### 1. Spiritual knowledge

***Vs. 9 ... asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding***



- a. Paul starts with the MIND... with knowledge, with wisdom
- b. The real battle is the battle for the MIND
- c. And God is able to heal the mind, feed the mind, fill the mind, saturate the mind
- d. And with what does Paul want it filled? With the KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WILL... knowing God's purposes, great and small, in an overarching system of spiritual wisdom and understanding
- e. Does God have the power to do this? To put truth in the minds of people?  
YES HE DOES!!

## 2. Walking worthy of Christ

***Vs. 10 And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way:***

- a. Paul prays for this knowledge not simply so that we will be smarter than other people or pass a theology exam
- b. Paul's goal is practical, "walking worthy of Christ"... living a daily life that glorifies Christ
- c. The better you know God's will, the more worthily you will walk in Christ
- d. Knowledge leads to daily life holiness and Christlikeness
- e. And look how comprehensive it is... MAY PLEASE HIM IN EVERY WAY

## 3. Growing fruitfulness

***Vs. 10 bearing fruit in every good work***

- a. Fruit bearing is THE indispensable PROOF of God's work of salvation
- b. If there is no fruit, there is no grace

***Luke 13:6-9 Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. <sup>7</sup> So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?' <sup>8</sup> "'Sir,' the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it. <sup>9</sup> If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.'"***

- c. What is fruit? Here it is a series of good works ordered by God for us to do for His glory

***Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.***

4. Growing in knowledge of God

- a. Nothing in all creation should be as precious to us as the knowledge of God
- b. To know Him, to know Him deeply, to know Him covenantally, should be the greatest treasure and pleasure and pursuit of your life

***John 17:3 Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.***

***Philippians 3:10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death***

***Jeremiah 9:23-24 This is what the LORD says: "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, <sup>24</sup> but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD***

- c. This is what Paul prays for for the Colossian Christians... to be constantly growing in their knowledge of God

5. Power for perseverance

***Vs. 11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience***

- a. Paul deeply desires the Colossian Christians to be strengthened with the power of God
- b. The Christian life is a SUPERNATURAL LIFE... it simply cannot be lived in our own strength
- c. In Ephesians, Paul prays that they would KNOW what kind of power is at work in them... the same power that raised Jesus from the dead and seated His at the right hand of God far above the entire universe
- d. Here Paul prays that the Colossians actually would be STRENGTHENED with God's power... constant ENERGY, DRIVING ENERGY
- e. The result is GREAT ENDURANCE AND PATIENCE
- f. Satan's constant work is discouragement... to get us to give up

g. Paul's prayer is for power for endurance

6. Joyful thanksgiving

***Vs. 11-12 joyfully <sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father***

- a. Thankfulness, as already mentioned, is extremely important in our healing, our salvation
- b. Paul desires the Colossians to live lives of joyful thanksgiving no matter what circumstances God
- c. Like Paul and Silas, publicly beaten and humiliated in Philippi, end up spending the night singing praise songs to God with all the other prisoners listening to them. This kind of joyful thanksgiving is ESSENTIAL to our witness to a lost and dying world

Summary: How does Paul pray? Paul prays with great constancy, specificity, and purpose

What does Paul pray for? Paul prays for the Colossians to be filled with spiritual knowledge, resulting in a life of constant growth, fruitfulness, and joyful thanksgiving

**III. The Ground of Paul's Prayer Life: Christ's Work of Redemption (vs. 12-14)**

***Colossians 1:11-14 ... giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. <sup>13</sup> For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.***

**A. Qualified by the Father**

1. Literally, the Father has "made us sufficient" for heaven... we are now qualified
2. The English word "qualified" usually relates to jobs or tasks: qualified to fly a fighter jet, qualified to perform brain surgery, qualified to drive a bus, qualified to serve as a missionary, etc.
3. Usually this qualification comes through self effort, through achievement, through things learned, deeds done, etc.
4. Usually qualification could be a source of great pride and boasting
5. NOT HERE... God the Father has qualified us... we did not make ourselves qualified to go to heaven

**B. Given a Share in the Inheritance**

1. The word "share" is rich... a sense of a place at the table in the feast

***Matthew 8:11 I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.***

2. A sense of an allotted inheritance in the New Heaven and New Earth

***Psalm 16:6 The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.***

***Daniel 12:13 "As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance."***

3. God the Father is worthy of thanks because he has qualified us to have a share in a heavenly inheritance

4. Inheritance is a beautiful term...

a. Not our fleshly understanding... someone dies and you get some material benefit

i) Some old silver tea set or porcelain heirloom

ii) Some stock portfolio with various assets

iii) Some real estate that's been in the family for generations

b. But that Christ died and gives us a place in the New Heavens and New Earth

***Matthew 5:5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.***

c. Eternal POSSESSIONS...

i) Especially God Himself

***Genesis 15:1 After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward."***

ii) But also property and responsibility

***Genesis 13:14-17 The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. <sup>15</sup> All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. <sup>16</sup> I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. <sup>17</sup> Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you."***

***Luke 16:11-12 So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? <sup>12</sup> And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?***

iii) And fellowship with the saints... they also are our inheritance

***Colossians 1:12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints***

***Revelation 7:9-10 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. <sup>10</sup> And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."***

### C. Rescued from the Kingdom of Darkness

1. The image of the advancing Kingdom of Christ is of a MILITARY RESCUE, done by an invading power

Once, after Jesus drove out a demon, his enemies said it was by the power of Beelzebub...

Jesus answered by giving an image of two warring kingdoms... but not as though they have equal power

***Luke 11:21-22 "When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. <sup>22</sup> But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which the man trusted and divides up the spoils."***

Jesus is the STRONGER warrior who strips Satan of his armor and plunders his dark Kingdom

2. We Christians have been RESCUED from Satan's dark Kingdom
  - a. Jesus' mission is a RESCUE mission
  - b. Delivering us from danger, from Satan's power, from sin, from death, from hell
  - c. RESCUED from this dark Kingdom
3. We are then SENT BACK INTO enemy territory to rescue other perishing people

Illus. In January of 1945, after the US Army had invaded the Philippines, the most daring and dramatic special forces raid of WWII was successfully carried off; 150 commandoes infiltrated Japanese lines, going 30 miles behind enemy lines to rescue 500 men from the

Cabanatuan POW camp, then daringly leading those weakened and injured POWs back over 30 miles of enemy territory to safety

That rescue is like what the church is doing in Jesus' name in missions

We ourselves were rescued from Satan's dark Kingdom, saved, trained, prepared, and sent BACK into Satan's enemy territory

4. And NOTHING can stop Christ from doing this

***Matthew 16:18 I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.***

***Isaiah 46:10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.***

D. Transferred into the Kingdom of Light

***Colossians 1:13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves***

1. Delivered from one authority, one power, one Kingdom... but not into no place, no authority, no power, no Kingdom
2. Satan sells "Freedom from authority"... freedom to do as you please, freedom to make your own way, to live your life
3. Christ says something very different:

***Matthew 11:28-30 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."***

Jesus' yoke is His KINGLY AUTHORITY... God rescues us from rebellion against God's own rule

There is a THRONE in heaven, and salvation is a rescue from rebellion against that throne

***Revelation 4:1-2 After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." <sup>2</sup> At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.***

4. God has rescued us from Satan's Kingdom and TRANSFERRED you into Christ's Kingdom... the Kingdom of God's beloved Son
5. Missionaries: this is your work; a vast, courageous rescue mission for the people of Central and Eastern Europe... rescuing them from darkness and

transferring them into glad, knowing, full submission to God and to His Son, Jesus Christ

#### E. Given Redemption, the Forgiveness of Sins

***Vs. 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.***

1. In Christ, in Him we have redemption... this is the most powerful need we have...
2. The image is one of a marketplace... of a purchase made at the payment of a price
3. Our sins had made for us an almost inconceivable debt... a debt so infinite we could never pay

***Matthew 18:23-24 "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. <sup>24</sup> As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him.***

Ten thousand talents = 750,000 pounds of gold... \$8.4 billion!!

The entire Roman Empire took in 9200 talents in taxes in one year

People not redeemed will not pay their debt if they spent a million years in the Lake of Fire

We owed an INFINITE debt

4. Our guilty consciences could never be salved by anything but the blood of Christ
5. Furthermore, our sins made us SLAVES... we could not stop sinning
6. Christ bought us with a price
7. AND the redemption in Christ's blood means our sins are COMPLETELY FORGIVEN

Martin Luther: "Sinners have a very hard time accepting their forgiveness from God; they have a very hard time believing this."

Brothers and sisters, believe it: In Christ we have redemption, the full forgiveness of sins

## IV. Application

### A. Prayer

1. Assess: Do You Pray Like This?

- a. Do you saturate your prayers with eternal truth?
- b. Do you follow Paul's pattern?
- c. How is your persistence in prayer

2. Develop a Theologically Informed Prayer Life

- a. Learn to take God's eternal redemptive plan for the nations and for individuals and pray it back to Him
- b. Apply it to specific people in the churches you're planting or among the people you're reaching

B. Thankfulness

C. Mission

D. Give Thanks to Christ for the Blessings of the Gospel

E. Pray for Works Around the World