

Remnant Life Church
October 25, 2015
Colossians 1 – Part 3
Colossians 1:3-4

- *We continually give thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah), as we are praying for you; For we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and your love for all of God's people, (Amplified version)*
- In these 2 verses are 3 ways that we can learn to better love the people in our lives

Review - FIRST WAY-

- His entire thought process was one of ***gratitude***
- Thanksgiving is the instinct of a life that is under the grace of God
- Gratitude is a great enemy of pride
 - To thank someone means that you are giving them praise and credit which means there is less or none for you
 - Pride always wants the credit, always wants the recognition, always needs to be thanked instead of thanking
 - This will keep you from being all that God desires for you
 - Paul came to finally understand that in his own life
 - **2 Cor 11** – Paul lists all of the experiences of his life and his pedigree that qualify him to say the things that he does; written in the middle of his missionary journeys
 - **1 Tim 1:15** - *Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.* (Written just a year or so before he was martyred by Nero)

Review - SECOND WAY

- Paul often included in his words of thanks in ***prayer***
- **Matthew 6** – how Jesus taught His disciples to pray
 - **9** – Holy is His name; praising Him for who He is
 - **10** – submitting our will to His
 - **11** – asking Him to supply our needs not our wants
 - **12** – forgiving our sins as we forgive other's sins
 - Think about that for just a moment. If you pray "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" while refusing to forgive those who have wronged you, this prayer which is meant to be a blessing becomes a self-inflicted curse. In that case you are really saying, "O God, since I have not forgiven my brother, please do not forgive me."
 - When we pray, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," we are asking God to forgive our sins *according to the same standard we have used* in forgiving the sins of others. There are 11 words in that sentence, but one of them is especially important. It's the little word "as." Everything hangs on the meaning of that word. "As" is the conjunction that joins the first half of the petition with the second half.
 - **13** – protection from desires of the flesh
- Forgiveness is a lynchpin of our lives as Christians and in fact all of Christianity

- The word Paul uses for prayer is one that's meaning is **inclusive** of all the types so prayer (7 types)
 1. submission; 2. confession; 3. petition; 4. supplication; 5. intercession; 6. praise; 7. thanksgiving
 - So Paul is saying – whatever you need prayer for I am praying that for you
- Unforgiveness will interfere with how we pray and even block our prayers (**Psa 66:18** - *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear*)

THIRD WAY

- (4) *because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people*
- Paul tells us in the 4th verse why he gives God thanks for them
- Their faith
 - What is their faith in? Not in faith itself but in Jesus
 - True saving faith always must have an object which is Jesus
 - Faith is like an anchor on a boat
 - + it is not the anchor that holds the boat secure
 - + it is what the anchor is holding to
 - + the anchor of our life is our faith but it only has the power to save if it is holding fast to Jesus
- Faith is only as good as the object of the faith
- Our Christian lives begin with saving faith; but then in the process of sanctification we must learn to "walk by faith, not by sight" (**2 Cor 5:7**) and then work by faith.
- Dr. J. Gresham Machen – early 20th century theologian who taught at Princeton University and then founded a more conservative Westminster Theological Seminary outside of Philadelphia. Many years ago, the great New Testament scholar and defender of the evangelical faith, was much in the public eye. In the early part of the last century, as a professor in Princeton Seminary, he stood almost alone within the Presbyterian Church in defending the full authority of the Bible, and the truthfulness of the gospel message it proclaimed. He was a great man of God, and had become quite controversial because of his bold stand. As it happened, during the height of the controversy, he was speaking one day at the Chicago Divinity School chapel -- which was crowded to the doors with listeners and reporters. An eyewitness said that he had held the crowd spellbound throughout his message, as he shared the Bible's teaching of the sinfulness of man, the grace of God, and the need for men and woman to be saved through faith in Christ. Near the end of his message, a female reporter spoke up. She asked, "Dr. Machen, you don't seem to think very much of man. What reason do you have for so belittling him?". To which Machen replied that he was simply repeating what the Bible said. The woman then shot back with a question that, in one form or another, you and I hear all the time in our own day; "But really Dr. Machen; It doesn't make any difference what anyone believes, does it? Just so long as he believes something?" Dr. Machen could have passed that question off; but he didn't. It was too important to not be answered. It was said that he leaned over the lectern, looked the reporter directly in the eye -- with news people all around him, and yet as if speaking directly and only to her -- boldly quoted the words of **John 3:36**; "*He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.*" Dr. Machen was asserting

that it makes all the difference in the world what someone believes about Christ; and apparently, he was asked no further questions.

- Paul is in prison but still sends words of encouragement
 - The tone of his letter is one that does not sound like he is in prison
- Words of encouragement and compliment
 - When was the last time you gave a compliment to someone important in your life?
 - Now, if you had to think about it, why?
 - For many it is simply because we are so wrapped up in what is going on in our own lives that we don't think of someone else long enough to say anything
 - I have never heard one good reason for not giving someone a compliment or word of encouragement
 - + I don't want them to get a swelled head
 - + Nobody says those things to me!
 - + They're just doing what they're supposed to do
 - ^ Everybody loves to hear that they have done a good job
 - ^ Gary Chapman – The Five Love Languages
 - 1. Acts of service
 - 2. Gifts
 - 3. Physical touch
 - 4. Quality time
 - 5. Words of affirmation
 - Many people are starving for just one kind word
 - That person might be living in your house, sitting next to you in class, working next to you OR even treating you badly, making you mad, being unfair
- As a Christian your life circumstances should never determine how you treat other people – WHY?
 - Because it is well past time that the Christian community (the church) begin to come together in unity
- Jesus was treated as badly and unfairly as anyone who ever lived yet He loved the people around Him
 - So much so that He sacrificed Himself for them, for you, and for me (*He Could Have Sent 10,000 Angels*)
- Finally, what we also see in **Col 1:4** is that the people's faith in Jesus becomes a well-spring of love that they share with one another
- How do these ways of treating people, gratitude – prayer – encouragement, affect you?
- How well do you put these things into practice
 - Are you willing to change the way you live or are you unwilling to take your eyes off of yourself long enough to realize that in order to demonstrate who Jesus is we must love one another selflessly, wastefully!
- A heart that is humbly focused on these things changes a person at the very core of who they are and then we are ready to be used of God in ways that we can only image – all to glorify His Name!