

**7-10-22**

**Sermon- The Hope We Have**

Scripture- Colossians 1; 1-14, CTW Ps 82

Hymns- 720, 256, 442

Theme- Peter tells us that as faithful followers of God, we are always supposed to be ready to give others the reason for the hope we have. In this passage, Paul explains this hope to the Colossians so they can continue the work God had begun in them. It is a good time for us to check the hope inside of us as well.

**I. First Consider Who Jesus is to You. It is mandatory for every Christian to wrestle with this question.**

**A. Have you ever heard someone say, "Jesus is just another man - a great one, perhaps, but just another man."** There is a professor who is a leading teacher of this view. She states "Jesus is simply an elder brother, companion, and trail blazer, one among many siblings who shows us how to live in oneness with the divine source." As true Evangelicals, we should of course speak against this view.

Let me set the scene. We should lead by considering the focus on the cross that Paul provides here in the opening verses of Colossians.

He proclaims in verse 12, that if we believe Jesus died on the cross we recognize HE HAS ACCEPTED US. Our Father "...has qualified you ..."

Through the cross Jesus QUALIFIED US. He fit us, made us adequate. Think about applying for a loan. The lending institution gathers all kinds of information about you to make sure you 'qualify', to assure themselves you have what it takes to pay back the loan.

God has a history of qualifying people. He told the Israelites in **Deuteronomy 7:7-8** that, "The LORD did not set his affection on

you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors..."

**B. Now Paul points back to the cross and says Jesus has qualified us.** He explained it when he wrote **Titus 3:5-7**: "...he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life."

Did you catch that? WE ARE QUALIFIED FOR A DIVINE INHERITANCE. The promise of a future inheritance is one of the many promises God makes to us in the Bible.

One way to think about it is to point to Princess Diana. When she died in 1997, she left a sizeable inheritance for her two sons, William and Harry, in the amount of \$20.4 million. With investments and interest, that amount grew during their teens and twenties to \$31.4 million.

But the provision was such that William and Harry were only able to inherit this considerable estate after their 30th birthdays. At age 30, the estate was theirs. It is had been promised to them. It was in their names, and it had been set aside for them.

**II. So Paul said God "...has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light." WE HAVE BEEN NAMED AS HIS HEIRS.**

**A. It's one of the awesome gifts He has given to us. Once again the language is drawn from the history of the Israelites.** God assigned and gave each tribe an inheritance of land – a lot, a plot, a territory.

It was an irrevocable gift. We, too, have been granted an inheritance. Through the cross Jesus qualified us to be the beneficiaries of His inheritance provisions.

In the words of Peter in **1Pt. 1:3-5**: "All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see."

**B. If you ever feel unacceptable, not qualified, unworthy - turn to the cross and listen – the current flowing from Jesus on that cross shouts out that you are accepted, you are qualified. Eph. 1:13-14** states "And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people."

The cross and the Holy Spirit are proof that God has accepted and qualified us as His heirs. No wonder Dale Evans once said, "All of my life I've been looking for a pot of gold at the foot of a rainbow, and I found it at the foot of the Cross." Believe it or not, the truth is Jesus' death on the cross has qualified you for the only inheritance that really counts.

**C. Not only has Jesus accepted us, He has PLACED US.** Verse 12 says "For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness..." Through the cross Jesus RESCUED US.

We're familiar with the concept of rescue. Whether it's a rescue at sea, or rescue from political and national enemies we have a

sense of what it involves. It means someone going in and saving another, usually with great risk and at a high cost.

Paul says Jesus has rescued us FROM THE DOMINION OF DARKNESS. That's a dominion that's subject to the power and jurisdiction of sin; it's ruled by the tyranny of Satan. Believe it or not, Satan has a domain.

Listen to **Luke 22:52-53**: "Then Jesus said to the chief priests and the officers of the Temple guard and the elders who had come there to get him, "Did you have to come with swords and clubs, as though I were an outlaw? I was with you in the Temple every day, and you did not try to arrest me. But this is your hour to act, when the power of darkness rules."

Jesus knew that the super-natural forces of evil were marshalled against Him. Paul said these same forces and powers of darkness threaten us as well.

**Eph. 6:12** states "For we are not fighting against human beings but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age."

**D. The darkness is a horrible, destructive place to be.** In the darkness people are unable to see things as they are; they grope, stumble, and fall. They do deeds of darkness, deeds they would never do in the light.

The good news is that we have been rescued. As God, through Moses, barged into Egypt and rescued the Israelites, so on the cross Jesus barged into the kingdom of darkness and rescued us.

And he didn't just say "You're free" and turn us loose; rather HE TRANSFERRED US; gave us a new place to live. "For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves..." He transferred us TO JESUS' KINGDOM.

In the ancient world, when one empire won a victory over another, it was the custom to take the population of the defeated

country and transfer it lock, stock and barrel to the conqueror's land.

Thus the people of the northern kingdom were taken away to Assyria, and the people of the southern kingdom were taken away to Babylon.

So, Paul says that we have a place! God has transferred the Christian from Satan's dominion to his own kingdom. Those are the only two kingdoms there are.

Paul explained it this way as he spoke before King Agrippa in **Acts 26:15-18** – "'Who are you, Lord?' I asked. And the Lord answered, 'I am Jesus, whom you persecute. But get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as my servant. You are to tell others what you have seen of me today and what I will show you in the future. I will rescue you from the people of Israel and from the Gentiles to whom I will send you. You are to open their eyes and turn them from the darkness to the light and from the power of Satan to God, so that through their faith in me they will have their sins forgiven and receive their place among God's chosen people.'"

These kingdoms, these dominions, are not physical territories but realms of authority – people either live in the realm of darkness or the realm of light, under the power and dominion of Satan or the power and dominion of Christ.

Believe it or not, the truth is Jesus' death on the cross has placed you into and under His dominion and authority.

Yes, there are still moments and days when you feel overwhelmed with the darkness – but remember this: **THE DARKNESS HAS NO AUTHORITY OVER US.**

**John 1:4-5** says "The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it."

**III. Through the cross Jesus has accepted us, placed us, and EMPOWERED US.** “For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

**A. WE ARE REDEEMED. Death on the cross was the price Jesus paid to bring us back into His kingdom. We are free to choose in which kingdom we will live.**

The power to do so comes from the fact that WE ARE FORGIVEN. **Rom. 8:1** reminds us that “There is no condemnation now for those who live in union with Christ Jesus.”

Forgiveness here refers to more than having clean hearts – it means a power has been broken. The chains that bound and held us in the kingdom of darkness are broken and gone.

The chains of fear, jealousy, anger, prejudice, unhealthy ambition, lust, greed, desire for instant gratification are broken. They have no power over us if we live in the power of the cross. We all live under some power; because of the cross we are free to choose which power.

**B. The Good News is that WE CAN LIVE UNDER A NEW POWER.** We see in **Romans 6: 6-7, 11-15** that “We know our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin...So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus. Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires. Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God. Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God’s grace.”

### **C. A real life illustration of this power of grace-** Lt.

Commander Edward Henry 'Butch' O'Hare was the Navy's number-one ace in WWII and the first naval aviator ever to win the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Chicago's O'Hare Airport is named after him. But it's important to know how he got there.

His father, Edward J. O'Hare was a slick lawyer for gangster Al Capone. Known as 'Artful Eddie' he had money and power. But one day he squealed on Capone – because he decided he wanted to give his son a break.

Before long, the mob silenced Artful Eddie with two shotgun blasts.

But because of Eddie's courageous change of heart, Butch was accepted at Annapolis: Eddie's confession and subsequent death satisfied the admissions people that the family's mob connections were severed.

Artful Eddie, through his death, qualified his son to be accepted, placed and empowered.

**D. This is what Jesus has done for us.** It's why He's more than just another man – He is Lord. As the HEIDELBERG CATECHISM eloquently states it, we call Him Lord "Because, not with gold or silver but at the cost of his blood, he has redeemed us body and soul from sin and all the dominion of the devil and has bought us for his very own."

So, Paul says we should joyfully give thanks to our Father in Heaven, for He has "...has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

Amen? Let Us Pray...