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Have you ever noticed the paradox of the modern world we live in? By almost every measurable standard—technology, climate-controlled homes, medical care, and instant access to food and information—we live in the most materially comfortable society in human history. If material comfort automatically produced thankful people, our culture would be bursting at the seams with gratitude.

Yet look around us. We are arguably more restless, more irritable, and more discontented than ever before. Why is that? Because

Entitlement is the natural enemy of gratitude.

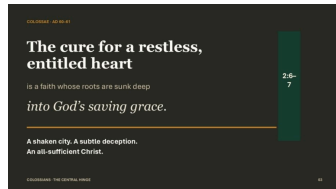
Entitlement looks at life through the lens of what it believes it is owed.

Entitlement says, *"I earned this, I deserve better, and frankly, God owes me a smoother road than the one I am walking on right now."*

Gratitude, on the other hand, looks at life through the lens of the cross.

Gratitude says, *"I deserved the pit of judgment, and instead, God gave me His Son."* Where entitlement reigns, thanksgiving withers. Where redemption is remembered, thanksgiving overflows.

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Nearly two thousand years ago, the Apostle Paul wrote a letter from a Roman prison cell to a small congregation in the Lycus River Valley of Asia Minor—a town called Colossae. On the surface, Colossae was a quiet market town tucked beneath the shadow of its wealthier neighbors, Laodicea and Hierapolis. Around AD 60 or 61, not long before or right around the time this letter arrived, a massive earthquake tore through the Lycus Valley, cracking foundations and leveling buildings across the region.

At the very same time, a spiritual earthquake was threatening the Colossian church. Smooth-talking false teachers had slipped into the community peddling what Paul calls in Colossians 2:8 a *"philosophy and empty deception."* They were not telling the believers in Colossae to throw Jesus away. They were far more subtle than that. They were whispering a message of spiritual discontentment:

"Jesus is a fine starting point. He gets your foot in the door. But if you want real spiritual fullness, if you want true protection from the dark powers of this world, you need something more. You need our secret mystic visions, our strict ascetic rules, and our higher knowledge."

Notice how Paul counters that poison. He does not hand them a new ladder to climb. Instead, in **Colossians 2:6–7**—the central hinge of the entire letter—Paul points them back to the all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ and the redemption the Father has already accomplished for them in **Colossians 1:12–14**. And right aligned with our responsive reading from David in **Psalms 30**, Paul shows us that

The cure for a restless, entitled heart is a faith whose roots are sunk deep into God's saving grace.

That brings us to our central truth as we launch our six-week journey toward Thanksgiving:

Because the Father has rescued us from the domain of darkness and rooted us firmly in Jesus Christ, an overflowing attitude of thanksgiving is the natural evidence of an established walk of faith.

If we want a gratitude that survives the tremors of life and silences the entitlement of our culture, Paul shows us four realities of a thankful walk in Christ.

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I. We Receive Our Gratitude When the Father Rescues Us from Darkness into Light (Colossians 1:12–14)

Before Paul ever commands us in chapter 2 to overflow with thanksgiving, he shows us in chapter 1 where a grateful heart comes from in the first place. Look back at **Colossians 1:12–14**.

Paul is praying that the believers would walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, and the culminating mark of that worthy walk in verse 12 is that we are *"joyfully giving thanks (εὐχαριστοῦντες — eucharistountes) to the Father."*

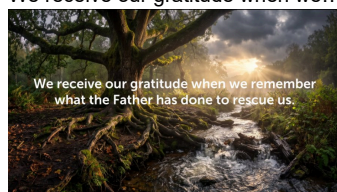
Why?

Why should a believer in Colossae—or a believer sitting here this morning—be continually, joyfully giving thanks to the Father even when life is hard?

Because in verses 12 through 14, Paul stacks up three completed past-tense (**Aorist**) actions of the Father and one permanent **Present-tense** possession we hold in the Son.

We do not manufacture gratitude by willpower.

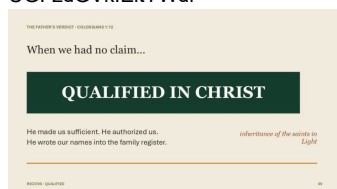
We receive our gratitude when we...



We receive our gratitude when we remember what the Father has done to rescue us.

Let that truth sink in for a moment—because right there is the reason our thankfulness so often runs dry by Tuesday afternoon. It isn't that God has stopped being good to us; it's that we have suffered spiritual amnesia and forgotten what it took to rescue us! You cannot force a cold heart to feel thankful by just telling yourself to try harder, any more than you can squeeze water out of a dry stone. Gratitude only wakes up when our eyes wake up to the reality of our rescue. And to make sure we never forget, Paul holds up three snapshots of our rescue right before our eyes—starting in verse 12, where first...

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A. We Give Thanks Because the Father Qualified Us When We Were Unqualified (1:12)

In Colossians 1:12 Paul calls us to give thanks *"to the Father, who has qualified (τῷ ἱκανώσαντι — tō hikanōsanti) us to share in the inheritance (τοῦ κλήρου — tou klērou) of the saints in Light."*

That Greek verb *hikanoō* ("qualified") means "to make sufficient, to authorize, or to certify that someone meets the standard." And notice that Paul puts it in the **aorist tense**—that just means it is marking a decisive, once-for-all legal act accomplished by the Father at the moment of our salvation.

What exactly did the Father certify us to receive?

Look at the rest of verse 12: He qualified us "to share in the inheritance (τὴν μερίδα τοῦ κλήρου — tēn merida tou klērou) of the saints in Light."

Here, Paul reaches straight into the Septuagint—the Greek translation of the Old Testament that his first-century readers knew—and pulls out the exact two-word phrase (μερίς and κληρος, "a share of the allotted inheritance") used in Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua when God divided the Promised Land among the tribes of Israel.

In the Old Testament, two rules governed that klēros: first, nobody could buy their parcel of the Promised Land, because God gave it by covenant promise; and second, you had to belong to Israel's covenant family to receive it. A foreign outsider whose name wasn't on the tribal register had zero legal right to claim a single acre of Canaan.

Now bring that Old Testament picture into the spiritual realm. Left to ourselves, every single one of us was a spiritual outsider—morally bankrupt and spiritually disqualified from ever entering the blinding purity of God's presence, *"the Light."* And the false teachers in Colossae were preying on that exact insecurity, telling Christians:

"You aren't fully qualified for God's inheritance yet! You need more rituals and secret knowledge to earn your spot!"

Paul says, *"Look at the Father's verdict!"* You and I did not earn our seat at the Father's table. When we had zero moral credentials and no spiritual birthright, the Father Himself wrote **our** names into His family register and stamped:

"Qualified in Christ"

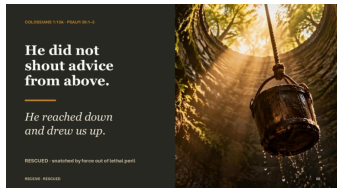


"Qualified in Christ"

across our lives!

How can cultural *entitlement* survive in a heart that remembers we were *bankrupt* outsiders whom the Father made full heirs of Light?

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B. We Give Thanks Because the Father Snatched Us from the Domain of Darkness (1:13a)

Look at the first half of verse 13.

How did the Father qualify us? It says there in v. 13, because

"He rescued (ἐρρύσαςτο — errysato) us from the domain (τῆς ἐξουσίας — tēs exousias, the tyrannical authority and jurisdiction) of darkness."

The Greek verb *rhyomai* does not mean to stand at the top of a cliff and shout helpful self-improvement advice to someone trying to climb up on their own.

Rhyomai means **"to snatch by force out of lethal peril."** It is the picture of a helpless captive bound under the crushing tyranny of a dark warlord, unable to break a single chain, until a mightier King storms the dungeon and pulls the prisoner out and free from shackles that held him there.

We heard that exact picture earlier in our responsive reading from **Psalm 30:1–3**. David wrote Psalm 30 for the dedication of the Temple site at the threshing floor of Ornan after God halted a devastating plague in Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 21). In **Psalm 30:1**, David cries out, *"I will extol You, O LORD, for You have lifted me up (דָּלִיתָנִי — dālītānī)!"*

In everyday Hebrew, the verb **דָּלַח (dālāh)** is the literal word for **drawing water up in a bucket from the bottom of a deep, dark limestone well or cistern**. And in verse 3, David explains why: *"O LORD, You have brought up my soul from Sheol; You have kept me alive, that I would not go down to the pit (bôr)."*

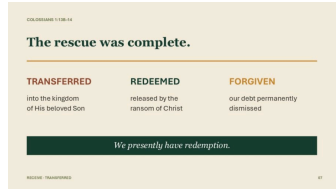
In the biblical world, those deep underground stone cisterns were not only used to hold water; they were also used as pitch-black subterranean dungeons to hold helpless captives. What David experienced when God spared his life from the edge of the grave in Psalm 30 is the exact spiritual rescue Paul is describing for every believer in Colossians 1:13a—being hoisted out of the dark dungeon of Satan's jurisdiction into the light of God!

Think about a bucket of water sitting at the bottom of a sixty-foot stone well in the pitch dark. How much ability does that bucket have to climb up into the sunlight on its own? None! Unless someone standing in the light lowers a rope into the shaft and hauls it up, it stays in the dark forever.

That is our biography in **Colossians 1:13a**. We were sitting at the bottom of the dark well of sin and condemnation, and :

The Father reached down in mercy and drew us up into the light!

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C. We Give Thanks Because the Father Relocated Our Citizenship and Canceled Our Debt (1:13b–14)

Look at how Paul completes the rescue in verses 13b–14: the Father did not just pull us out of the pit and leave us wandering in no-man's-land; He:

"...transferred (μετέστησεν — metestēsen) us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have (ἔχομεν — echomen) redemption (τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν), the forgiveness (τὴν ἄφεσιν) of sins."

In the ancient world, the verb *methistēmi* ("transferred") was used when an emperor took an entire population from one realm and transplanted them to live as free citizens in a new land. In fact, the Jewish historian Josephus recorded how King Antiochus the Great relocated two thousand Jewish families from Babylon right into Phrygia—the very region where Colossae sat!

Every person in that church knew what an imperial relocation meant.

And notice the tense shift in verse 14: after three **Aorist** verbs describing what the Father completed in the past

(He qualified us, He rescued us, He transferred us),

Paul shifts to the **Present Active Indicative**:

"...in whom we presently have (ἔχομεν)" redemption—release by the ransom payment of Christ's blood—and the permanent dismissal (aphesin) of our sins.

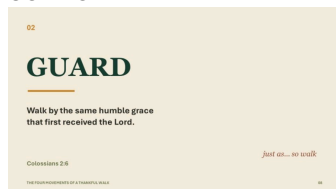
That is where gratitude begins.

We **receive** our gratitude when we look back at the pit the Father drew us out of and the Kingdom He placed us into.

But once we have received that grace, how do we keep our gratitude from drying up in the middle of everyday life?

Turn forward one page to **Colossians 2:6**, where Paul moves from our past rescue to our present walk.

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II. We Guard Our Gratitude When We Walk by the Same Grace That First Drew Us to Received the Lord (Colossians 2:6)

Up to **Colossians 2:5**, Paul has not given the church a single command—he has simply declared who Christ is and what God has done.

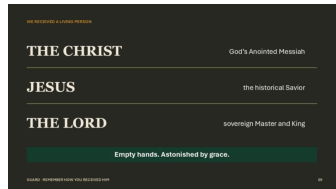
Now, in **Colossians 2:6**, we arrive at the **very first imperative command** of the entire epistle:

"Therefore, just as (Ὡς οὖν) you received (παρελάβετε) the Christ, Jesus the Lord, so (οὕτως) walk (περιπατεῖτε) in Him..."

Notice how personal this is. Paul does not say, "Let gratitude take a walk." He speaks directly to **us**—the redeemed believers in our seats—and shows us that:

We guard our gratitude when we walk by the same humble grace that we first used to receive the Lord.

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A. We Remember How We First Received Christ (Ὡς οὖν παρελάβετε — 2:6a)

Look first at how we started:

"Therefore, just as you received (παρελάβετε — parelabete) the Christ, Jesus the Lord..."

The verb “received” *paralambanō* was the technical term for welcoming and embracing authoritative truth handed down to you—the apostolic Gospel that Epaphras had preached to them.

Yet notice that when we became Christians:

We did not merely adopt a philosophy or a moral code;

We received a living **Person**

And Paul names Him with all three of His glorious titles:

τὸν Χριστὸν (The Christ): God's Anointed Messiah, the fulfillment of every Old Testament promise.

Ἰησοῦν (Jesus): The historical Savior who took on flesh and died for us at Calvary.

τὸν κύριον (The Lord): The sovereign Master and King over the universe and over our lives.

Think back to the day you first received Christ Jesus the Lord.

How did you come to Him?

Did you strut up to the throne of God flashing your moral resume, demanding what you were owed?

No! You came with empty, bankrupt, needy hands of faith, amazed that the King of glory would forgive a sinner like you.

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B. We Refuse to "Graduate" Beyond Humble Dependence (οὕτως περιπατεῖτε ἐν αὐτῷ — 2:6b)

Now look at Paul's correlative logic:

"Just as (ὡς) you received Christ Jesus the Lord, in that exact same way (οὕτως) walk (περιπατεῖτε) in Him."

"Walk in Him" (Περιπατεῖτε [*peripateite*]) is a **Present Active Imperative**—

"keep on walking day by day" inside the sphere of Christ (ἐν αὐτῷ).

Here is the vital secret to guarding a thankful heart:

You never graduate beyond the posture of humble dependence that saved you.

Why did David get into spiritual trouble in the backstory of **Psalm 30**? He tells us in **Psalm 30:6**: *"Now as for me, I said in my prosperity, 'I will never be moved.'"* When things were going smoothly, David drifted from humble dependence into self-reliant presumption—and the moment you think you are self-made or spiritually superior, gratitude evaporates and entitlement moves in.

Have you ever met a believer who has been walking with the Lord for thirty years, yet somewhere along the way lost the wonder of grace?

When we start acting like spiritual veterans who have "graduated" past simple, daily dependence on Jesus, we become prime targets for grumbling.

We guard our gratitude when we wake up every single morning and say, *"Lord Jesus, I need Your grace just as desperately at 10:00 AM this morning as I did the moment You first pulled me out of the pit."*

So we **receive** our gratitude from the Father's rescue (1:12–14), and we **guard** our gratitude by walking in daily dependence on Christ (2:6).

But as we walk in Him, are we left to hold ourselves together by sheer grit?

Look at the first three phrases of **Colossians 2:7**, where Paul shows us how our gratitude goes deeper, so that...

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III. We Deepen Our Gratitude as God Roots, Builds, and Establishes Us in Christ (Colossians 2:7a)

In **Colossians 2:7**, Paul attaches four participles to the command *"walk in Him."*

If you look closely at the Greek grammar of verse 7, something remarkable jumps off the page: the **first three participles are all in the Passive Voice**—what grammarians call **"divine passives"**—meaning **God** is the One performing the action upon **us**!

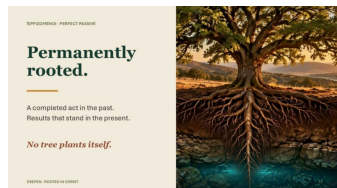
We do not deepen our gratitude by looking inward at our own willpower.

We deepen our gratitude as we realize that God Himself is rooting, building, and establishing us in Christ.

Notice the three vivid first-century pictures Paul paints for us.

First...

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A. We Have Been Permanently Rooted by God in Christ (ἐρριζωμένοι — "Having Been Firmly Rooted")

First, Paul uses an **agricultural metaphor**:

"having been firmly rooted (ἐρριζωμένοι — errizōmenoi) in Him."

In Greek, ἐρριζωμένοι is a **Perfect Passive Participle** from the word for "root" (*rhiza*). The **perfect tense** describes a completed action in the past whose results stand permanently in the present; the **passive voice** reminds us that no tree ever planted itself.

At the moment of your conversion, God the Father took your life and drove your taproot deep into the rich, inexhaustible soil of Jesus Christ.

Think about the difference between a shallow-rooted lawn and a deep-rooted oak tree during a scorching August drought here in South Jersey. When the rain stops for three weeks and the sun bakes the topsoil, grass with half-inch surface roots turns brown and crispy almost overnight because it depends entirely on surface weather. But an oak tree whose taproot reaches down into the underground water table stays vibrant green right through the heatwave—Echoing Psalm 1:3 and Jeremiah 17:8, *"it will not be anxious in a year of drought, nor cease to yield fruit."*

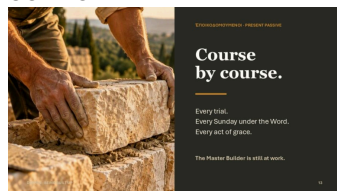
Notice Paul's intentional paradox: we **walk** (v. 6) while remaining **permanently rooted** in one place (v. 7a)—because a Christian never walks away from his roots in Christ!

When our emotions are rooted in surface circumstances, our gratitude dies the first time a hot wind blows.

When we draw daily nourishment from our permanent taproot in Christ, our gratitude deepens even in drought.

Since we are deeply rooted in Christ...

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B. We Are Being Progressively Built Up by God (ἐποικοδομούμενοι — "Now Being Built Up in Him")

Paul shifts from the orchard to the construction site with an **architectural metaphor**, and he shifts the tense from the **Perfect Passive** (once-for-all planting) to a **Present Passive Participle**:

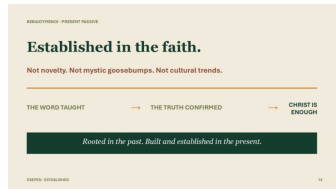
"and now being continually built up (ἐποικοδομούμενοι — epikodomoumenoi) in Him."

Remember who was listening to this letter be read aloud! The believers in Colossae were living surrounded by the rubble of the Lycus Valley earthquake. They had seen with their own eyes what happens when a tall, impressive house is built on shifting fault lines.

Paul looks at those shaken believers and says, *"God has not only planted your roots in Christ; He is the Master Builder actively constructing the superstructure of your life layer by layer upon the unshakeable bedrock of Jesus Christ."*

Every trial God carries you through, every Sunday you sit under His Word, the Master Builder is adding another course of stone to your life in Christ.

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C. We Are Being Doctrinally Established in the Faith (βεβαιούμενοι ἐν τῇ πίστει — "And Established in Your Faith, Just as You Were Taught")

In the next part of v. 7, Paul moves to the courtroom and marketplace with a **legal metaphor**, using another **Present Passive Participle**:

"and being continually established (βεβαιούμενοι — bebaioumenoi) in the faith (ἐν τῇ πίστει), just as you were taught (καθὼς ἐδιδάχθητε)."

In first-century Greek commercial documents, the verb *bebaioō* was the legal guarantee or warranty on a property deed—certifying that the buyer's title was ironclad against any challenger. And how does God progressively confirm and stabilize our hearts? Notice the definite article in the Greek text: ἐν τῇ πίστει

—"in the faith, just as you were taught."

Here, "the faith" is the objective body of apostolic truth—the Word of God that Epaphras had faithfully taught them.

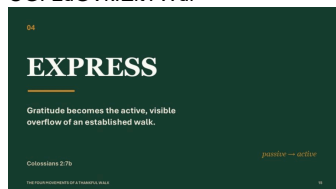
God does not deepen our stability through novelty, mystic goosebumps, or cultural trends.

As we hold fast to the Word of God we have been taught, the Holy Spirit certifies the truth in our hearts so that we know that we know that Christ is enough.

Look at the momentum building in verse 7: God **planted** our taproot in the past (Perfect Passive), God **is building** our house in the present (Present Passive), and God **is establishing** our confidence in the truth (Present Passive).

What happens inside a believer when all that divine grace is pouring into their soul? Look at the final phrase of **Colossians 2:7**, where the grammar suddenly flips.

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IV. We Express Our Gratitude as the Active Overflow of an Established Walk of Faith (Colossians 2:7b)

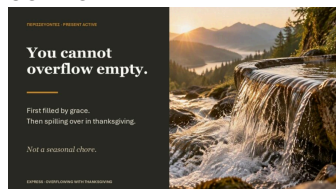
After three consecutive **Passive Participles** describing what God has done and is doing *in us*, Paul switches the fourth participle to the **Present Active Voice**:

"...overflowing (περισσεύοντες — perisseuontes) with thanksgiving (ἐν εὐχαριστίᾳ)."

Here is the grammatical and spiritual payoff of our entire text:

We express our gratitude as the active, visible overflow of an established walk of faith.

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A. We Actively Spill Over the Banks with Thanksgiving (περισσεύοντες ἐν εὐχαριστίᾳ — 2:7b)

Paul's fourth metaphor is **hydrological**: the verb *perisseuō* (*perisseuō*) pictures a river in the spring thaw swelling until it spills right over its banks, or an artesian spring bubbling up until the basin overflows in every direction.

Why did Paul wait until the very end of verse 7 to switch from the **Passive Voice** to the **Active Voice**? Because you cannot spill over with what you have not first been filled with!

If someone comes up to you when your cup is bone-dry and barks, "*Try harder to overflow!*"—all you will produce is guilt and exhaustion.

But when you let your mind soak in **Colossians 1:12–14**—that the Father qualified you, snatched you out of the dark pit, relocated you into His Son's Kingdom, and canceled your sin debt—and when you walk in **Colossians 2:6–7a** knowing that God has permanently rooted you, is building you up, and is establishing you in Jesus Christ—your cup fills to the brim until **you** actively spill over the banks with thanksgiving!

An overflowing attitude of thanksgiving is not a seasonal chore; it is the natural evidence of an established walk of faith.

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B. We Refuse to Be Kidnapped by Deception or Kept Silent in Praise (Col. 2:7b–8; Psalm 30:11–12)

Notice two powerful results when a believer's life overflows with thanksgiving:

First, look at the very next sentence in **Colossians 2:8**:

"See to it that no one takes you captive (ὁ συλαγωγῶν — kidnaps you or carries you off as war plunder) through philosophy and empty deception..."

Why did Paul place *"overflowing with thanksgiving"* at the end of verse 7 right before the warning against spiritual kidnapping in verse 8? **Because...**

A grateful Christian is a terrible target for spiritual deception!

Think back to the Garden of Eden in Genesis 3. How did the serpent lure Eve into rebellion? Before he could get her to bite the forbidden fruit, he first had to make her ungrateful and discontented with all the trees God had already generously given her.

Satan's bait always hooks an entitled, ungrateful heart.

When you are overflowing with gratitude for the total sufficiency of Jesus Christ, the world's empty philosophies have nothing left to bribe you with.

Think back to how David concluded our responsive reading in **Psalm 30:11–12**:

*"You have turned (hāpak — flipped 180 degrees) my mourning into dancing for me; You have untied (pittah) my sackcloth and girded me with gladness, **that (lēma'an — for the express purpose that) my soul may sing praise to You and not be silent (wēlō' yiddōm).** O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You forever!"*

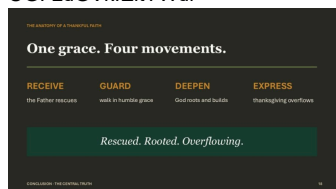
Why did God untie your coarse prison sackcloth of sin and clothe you in the glad robes of Christ's righteousness? *"So that your soul may sing praise to Him and **not be silent!**"*

When a river overflows its banks, you can hear the rush of the water.

A redeemed, rooted believer cannot sit in tight-lipped silence while the world grumbles around us.

Conclusion:

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Next Sunday the calendar turns to November, and over the next five weeks our culture will talk a great deal about "being thankful"—usually as a vague, horizontal warm feeling for turkey, family, and football as long as life is going well.

But as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, our gratitude grows in entirely different soil.

Because the Father has rescued us from the domain of darkness and rooted us firmly in Jesus Christ, an overflowing attitude of thanksgiving is the natural evidence of an established walk of faith.

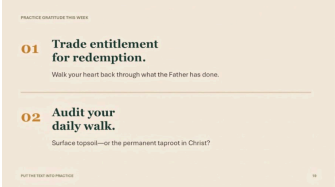
We receive our gratitude when the Father rescues us from darkness into Light (1:12–14).

We guard our gratitude when we walk by the same humble grace that first received the Lord (2:6).

We deepen our gratitude as God roots, builds, and establishes us in Christ (2:7a).

And **we express** our gratitude as the active overflow of an established walk of faith (2:7b).

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As we head out into this week, let's put this text into practice in three concrete ways:

1. Trade Entitlement for Redemption:

The first time you catch yourself grumbling, irritable, or feeling entitled this week, stop in your tracks and walk your heart back through the four truths of Colossians 1:12–14 and Psalm 30:1–3: The Father qualified me when I was unqualified; He drew me up like a bucket from the dark pit; He transferred my citizenship into His Son's Kingdom; and He canceled my debt at the cross.

2. Audit Your Daily Walk:

When anxious headlines, physical aches, or unexpected bills hit this week, ask yourself: Am I drawing my daily outlook from surface topsoil, or am I drawing nourishment from my permanent taproot in Christ Jesus the Lord (ἐρριζωμένοι ἐν αὐτῷ)?

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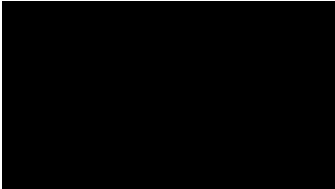
3. Refuse to Be Silent and let the River Spill Over:

Like David in Psalm 30:12, do not keep your gratitude locked inside your head. Speak it aloud to the Father in prayer every morning, speak it across your dinner table, and speak it to a brother or sister who needs to be reminded that our Redeemer is enough.

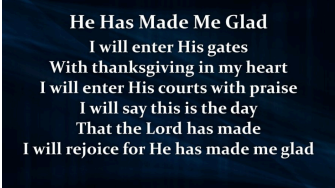
Sermon Editor Slides

After Sermon

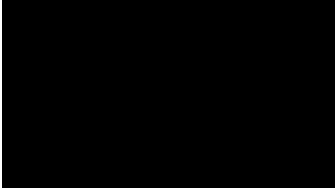
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He Has Made Me Glad



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Slide Group

Post-Service Loop

9 slides in 9 items • 1m, 36s