

**“The Pattern(s) of the Christian Life”**  
**Colossians 1:9-14**  
**June 6, 2021**  
**Faith Presbyterian Church – Morning Service**  
*Pastor Nicoletti*

We continue, this morning, in our new series on Paul’s letter to the Colossians, on to Colossians 1:9-14.

Please listen carefully, for this is God’s word for us this morning.

<sup>1:9</sup> And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, <sup>10</sup>so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; <sup>11</sup>being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; <sup>12</sup>giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. <sup>13</sup>He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, <sup>14</sup>in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

This is the word of the Lord. (Thanks be to God.)

“All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord endures forever.” [1 Peter 1:24-25]

Let’s pray ...

Lord, we plead before you this morning,  
to give us understanding according to your word.  
Let our prayer come before you now,  
and deliver us according to your promises.  
Our lips this morning have poured out your praise,  
because you teach us your statutes.  
Our tongues have sung of your word,  
because we know that all your commandments are right.  
And so, as we attend now to your word,  
grant us understanding and be at work in our hearts,  
for Jesus’s sake. Amen  
[Based on Psalm 119:169-172]

### **Introduction**

We have before us this morning another one of those dense paragraphs that the Apostle Paul is known for writing. In the Greek, this passage – verses nine through fourteen – is all one complex

sentence. And there is a lot going on here. So we are going to need to spend some time teasing it apart.

And as we do, I think three particular pieces come into focus. Paul here is praying for the Colossian Christians. He is praying that they would continue in the pattern of the Christian life. And so, as he prays, he lays out the pattern of the Christian life that he is praying they will continue in. But as we look more closely, we see that he is laying out not one pattern, but three patterns: three patterns of the Christian life. And all of them are different, but all of them are, at the same time, true.

This morning I want to examine those patterns, and consider how they apply to us.

Last week we began at the top and drilled down to the passage's foundation, but this week we will actually do the opposite: we will begin at the bottom of the text – at its base, its foundation – and we will work our way up.

And as we do, we will see those three patterns of the Christian life.

### **A Pattern of Rescue**

And so, to find our first pattern of the Christian life, we begin with the last two verses of our text – the foundation of the structure: verses thirteen and fourteen. There we read: “He [that is, God the Father,] has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

The first, and the foundational pattern we need to see here is that the Christian life is a life in the pattern of rescue. The Christian life is a life in the pattern of rescue.

That's what Paul is saying in these verses.

And that is important, because it is actually the most foundational pattern of the Christian life – the pattern on which every other pattern must depend ... and yet it is also the pattern we are most prone to forget.

Because we don't really like it. Because it asserts that we are powerless. And it does that in a few different ways.

It does this first by evoking patterns of the Old Testament. With Paul's use of “deliverance” or “rescue” language, many commentators think that Paul is alluding to the rescue of God's people Israel from Egypt, or to other similar Old Testament instances of God rescuing his people. [Moo, 103; Wright, 67]

What each of those patterns in the Old Testament has in common is the helplessness of those whom God delivers. Whether it's the Israelites enslaved in Egypt, the Jews in exile, or the people of God facing some other super-power at the time, what each of these incidents in the Old

Testament has in common is that the people are unable to save themselves. They need to be rescued by another. They are helpless, in and of themselves. And that is something we tend to want to deny about ourselves. If we are okay, then we want to assert that we are okay because we made ourselves okay, not because another rescued us. And if we are not okay, we want to believe that we can deliver ourselves. But the patterns of the Old Testament again and again deny these assertions. We cannot save ourselves. We are in need of rescue. And so, if we are truly secure, it is only because God has already rescued us and made us secure. And if we are not secure, then only God can give us the true security we long for.

And if those allusions were a bit too subtle, the second thing Paul does to impress upon us the realities of our helplessness and need, is that he frames our lives in terms of kings and dominions. He speaks, in verse thirteen, of us living first under one domain and then being transferred to another kingdom. In both cases, we are not the chief actors or chief powers. We are not described as one power among a set of other, similar, powers, but as subjects under the power of another. We are not presented as actors within a spiritual social contract, but as those subject to some greater power – we are either under the domain of darkness, or under the kingdom of Jesus, the Son. We are not movers and shakers – we are not forces to be reckoned with (as we might like to imagine), but we are tiny people, subject to a domain or a kingdom. One domain is terrible and the other is glorious, but both emphatically agree on at least one thing: that *we* are not in charge.

But then Paul goes even further. Because he also evokes the language of “redemption.” Because of our Christian or post-Christian context, we tend to think of “redemption” in terms of spiritual or psychological or moral categories. But that would not have been the first context to come to mind in Paul’s day. In Paul’s day, language of “redemption” evoked images of slavery.

And so the language of redemption in verse fourteen would have brought to mind the picture of a price paid for a slave in order “to secure his or her release from slavery.” [Moo, 106; Wright, 67] Which gives a third image of our helplessness. Paul pictures us as slaves, at the mercy of a master who owns us – and in this case that master is sin. And our only hope of freedom is for another to purchase freedom for us – for another to “redeem” us so that we are no longer subject to slavery. But we are not able to redeem ourselves. And so again, our helplessness and need for rescue is emphasized.

Finally, these verses also evoke the theme of debt. For, as Paul says at the end of verse fourteen, we need forgiveness of sins. We have a spiritual debt. And we cannot pay it. It must be forgiven. Which once more makes us helpless and in need of rescue.

Paul, with each image emphasizes our helplessness and need to be rescued by one who is stronger than we are. And the first thing you need to admit is that whether you are a Christian or not, at least part of you is resistant to these images. If you’re a Christian, you may happily affirm these claims on paper. You may recite them in our liturgy. But part of you always pushes back. Part of you, in your heart, always qualifies. Part of you wants – demands – to believe that you are more powerful than that, you can fight your enemies, you are the real power in your life, you are slave to no one, you owe no one anything.

But it is a lie. And if you cling to that lie, you cannot really hear anything else Paul has to say to you.

Paul, in the images he has chosen, forces us to reckon with our helplessness. But in the very same words – in the very same images – he also tells us that rescue has come.

It's not just that we need deliverance, but, as he says in verse thirteen, if we have trusted in Christ, then we *have been* delivered, just as surely as God delivered Israel from Egypt and the Jews from Babylon.

It's not just that, since we are powerless, we need a good and loving king, but that in Jesus Christ, God's Son, we have been given a good and loving king, and if we trust in him then we already have been transferred into his benevolent kingdom.

It's not just that we are slaves to sin in need of redemption, but, as we see in verse fourteen, as believers we already "have redemption" – Christ has ransomed all who have trusted in him from their former master: sin.

And it's not just that we have a spiritual debt, but that in Christ, forgiveness of that debt has been offered. In Christ we have the forgiveness of our sins.

The first, and most fundamental pattern of the Christian life for us to observe in our text is that though we are helpless, Christ has rescued and will rescue all who trust in him.

The question is whether we will really accept that fact.

If you are a Christian, then that means you need to stop, and seriously consider, how you resist this important truth in your heart, in your mind, and in your life. If your life is pretty much together, then do you give yourself most of the credit? Maybe not in the abstract ... but you do when you compare yourself to others who aren't doing as well ... don't you?

And if your life is not going so well, where do you turn for help? Where do you think the ultimate power lies to turn your spiritual life around? Do you seek it in yourself? Or do you seek it in the God who is able to truly deliver us?

Either way, you need to start with this pattern, because this is the foundation. Everything else in our text is built on this, and so as hard as you may work on the other two patterns, if you don't have this pattern, then it will all crumble, because it will lack a true foundation.

That's what the Pharisees did. They focused on the patterns of what they were to do, but they neglected the foundation – the rescue they needed from God. And so their faith came to nothing. Let us not make the same mistake.

If you are not a Christian, then you need to hear Paul's words which confront you with your current state – your true starting point.

Paul doesn't say that we each start our spiritual lives in some sort of neutral space. He says that we exist in one of two domains. And if we are not sincere members of the kingdom of Jesus, then we live in the domain of darkness.

One commentator writes: "Paul shares with other New Testament writers, and with Jesus himself, the belief in the existence of a dark power to whom the human race, and the world, is subject because of sin." [Wright, 65-66] Jesus, in the gospel, has defeated that dark force. But if you haven't aligned yourself with him – if you haven't trusted in and pledged your deepest allegiance to Jesus – then you are not part of his kingdom, which means that you remain in the domain of spiritual darkness. [Moo, 104]

And you cannot break out of that domain yourself. There is no clever escape you can pull off. There is no release you can earn. The only way out is to appeal to the one who, in his death and resurrection, has proven that he is more powerful than the domain of darkness, and to ask him to deliver you and bring you into his kingdom. And if you earnestly ask him, he will do it.

And so that is the first pattern we see here – the foundational pattern of the Christian life that Paul puts before us is that the Christian life is a life in the pattern of rescue.

### **A Pattern of Progress**

And on that foundation is built the next pattern – the second pattern of our text. And the second pattern of our text is that: The Christian life is lived in a pattern of progress. The Christian life is lived in a pattern of progress.

We see that in verses eleven and twelve. There we read that as Paul is praying that the Colossian Christians will "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord," he also prays that they would be "strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light."

The Christian life, Paul tells us, is supposed to have some progress. God doesn't just rescue us from the danger that we put ourselves in and then leave us as we were. After all, we, in our rebellion against God, put ourselves in the domain of darkness. We in our willful disobedience, made ourselves slaves to sin. We, in our repeated sin, put ourselves in unfathomable spiritual debt. The rescue we need is not just external, but internal. We need to be changed. And Paul here tells us that God not only rescues us from our external threats, but he is at work, progressively eliminating the internal threats that reside in our hearts.

And Paul identifies three stages of that progressive pattern.

It starts with God strengthening us. Paul writes in verse eleven that he is praying that they would be "strengthened with all power, according to his [that is, God's] glorious might." The first, step, again, begins with God. Paul does not pray that the Colossians would muster up some spiritual

strength, but that God, as a gift, would give them his strength, so that by his help, they themselves would become spiritually strong. [Moo, 97]

And what does that spiritual strength lead to? According to Paul, what does real spiritual progress look like? He tells us in the rest of verse eleven. The might of God strengthening them spiritually would lead to: “all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father.”

That’s an interesting list, because it’s short, and might not be the kind of list we ourselves would have given to describe spiritual strength and progress. We tend to think of mighty external deeds done for the kingdom. But Paul thinks of endurance, patience, joy, and thanks.

First, he mentions “endurance” and “patience.” Some commentators have suggested that “endurance” may apply more to circumstances the Colossian Christians may face, while “patience” may especially apply to the people the Colossian Christians may have to deal with. [Moo, 98-99] As one writer puts it: Endurance “is what faith, hope and love bring to an apparently impossible situation,” while patience is what faith, hope and love “show to an apparently impossible person.” [Wright, 64]

Whether or not that distinction is what Paul has in mind, these terms refer to “a disposition of level-headedness, integrity, and peace in the face of suffering.” [Gupta, 46]

As one commentator puts it: “Paul singles out these qualities [of endurance and patience] as the weapons one needs to live in the world undaunted by its crises and panics. A patient and longsuffering spirit, the quiet corollary of faith, hope and love, is the product of the settled conviction that the Father of Jesus Christ is the sovereign Lord of the world, and that he is able to bring about his purposes in his own time and manner.” [Wright, 63]

With that, Paul adds joy. Spiritual progress means an increase not only in endurance and patience, but also in joy. The Christian does not become more stoic and emotionally flat as he or she grows in spiritual strength and makes spiritual progress. They become more joyful.

And finally, Paul lists that this spiritual progress and strengthening is to result in them giving thanks to God the Father.

And it’s noteworthy that “giving thanks” is included on Paul’s relatively short list of what it means to live a life – to “walk” in a way – that is “worthy of the Lord. [Moo, 100] We far too often treat thanksgiving as something we maybe need to cultivate in our children, but don’t need to think too seriously about cultivating in our own hearts. But Paul recognizes that thanksgiving is a picture of true, and mature, spiritual growth.

Finally, Paul points to the destination of this progress in verse twelve: their “share in the inheritance of the saints in light.” Paul may be alluding to the distribution of the Promised Land for Israel [Moo, 101; Wright, 64-65], but in any case, his emphasis is the future hope with all the saints that the Colossian Christians have.

And so in all of this, Paul points to the pattern of progress that is to be a part of the Christian life: God strengthens according to his glorious might, we increase in endurance, patience, joy, and thanks, and we then share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

Now, we need to be careful here, because we can be tempted at this point to read this pattern as if God gets us started in the Christian life, but we are the ones who complete that work. And while we are called on to be active – as we will consider in just a moment – Paul is almost tedious in reminding us again and again that all of this progress comes from God.

Because our progress not only all depends on that first pattern, in which God rescues us from the domain of darkness, but our progress itself is based on God's might, as Paul says in verse eleven. And though we are to make use of God's might, even as we do, it is never we who qualify ourselves to share in the inheritance of the saints in light, but, as Paul stresses again in verse twelve, it is God the Father who qualifies us to share in the inheritance of the saints of light.

That truth is key.

And at the very same time we are called on to act. We are called on to grow. We are called on to strive for spiritual progress. We are called on to seek the strength that can only come from God's power – as we come first to him for help. We are called to actively seek real growth in a variety of ways, but especially including endurance, patience, joy, and thanks. And we are called on to set our eyes on our future hope, when we will not only receive the inheritance of the saints, but we will be people who belong among the glorified saints, because God will have transformed us to gloriously bear his image as we were meant to.

Is that the kind of spiritual progress you seek? When you face difficult circumstances ... when you deal with difficult people ... when you lack joy ... when you lack thankfulness ... do you turn to God for strength? Do you look to him and see this as an opportunity for spiritual progress? Do you remember the kind of saint in light that God is making you into, and do you seek to take one more tiny step towards that goal in the midst of the difficulties and temptations before you?

That is the second pattern Paul lays out here for the Christian life: The Christian life is lived in a pattern of progress. That progress is not usually a straight line. It's not usually an obvious path. It has its ups and downs. But overall, when we step back, it is to be a life of spiritual progress.

### **A Pattern of Cycles**

Finally, we come to our last pattern. We find it in verses nine and ten. There Paul writes: "from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."

Here Paul says that the pattern of the Christian life goes from knowledge of God, to walking in a manner worthy of the Lord, to bearing fruit, and then to knowledge of God ... which is right back to where it started.

And so the third thing we see is that the Christian life is lived in a pattern of a cycle. The Christian life is lived in a pattern of a cycle.

And it's this cycle that shows us how we are to live out the other two patterns in our day-to-day lives: how we are to live as people transferred from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of Christ, and how we are to live in a way that leads to the spiritual progress described in verses eleven and twelve. We are to live our Christian lives in the pattern of a cycle.

And that cycle starts with "knowledge of [God's] will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding." Now what exactly does that mean?

One writer puts it like this – he says: "What Paul has in mind is not some particular or special direction for one's life (as we often use the phrase 'God's will'), but a deep and abiding understanding of the revelation of Christ and all that he means for the universe and for the Colossians." [Moo, 93]

And we can see what that looks like even better when we consider the words Paul has used to describe it. Paul uses three words: knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. And those words have a history together in the Old Testament that help us get a better picture of what Paul has in mind here. Because Paul has chosen three words that were already connected in certain passages of the Old Testament – particularly in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament in Paul's day. And so we can look back to those texts to get a better picture of what Paul has in mind here. [Moo, 94; Wright, 62]

First, we find two of these words repeatedly linked in discussions about what kind of attributes a good king needs to rule God's people [1 Chron 22:12; 2 Chron 1:10,11,12], and what kind of virtues a person needs to live a good life [Prov. 1:7, 2:2,3,6, etc.]. These texts give us a good first indication that the kind of understanding and wisdom Paul has in mind here is not primarily esoteric or academic, but practical.

But next, we find all three words used together in Isaiah 11:2, where God describes the sort of gifts he will give to the Messiah. There we read that he will give the Messiah "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding" and the "spirit of knowledge and fear of the LORD." These are the skills the Messiah will need, we read in the rest of Isaiah 11, to bring righteousness and faithfulness and equity to the earth, taking those heavenly realities and making them earthly realities.

But even before that, the same three words in Hebrew as we see in the passage from Isaiah are brought up in two passages in the book of Exodus, concerning the man who is tasked with designing and overseeing the building of God's tabernacle. There God describes the gift he will give that man as including "wisdom", "understanding" and "knowledge." And so, in Exodus 31 we read this: "Then the LORD said to Moses, 'See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of

Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills—to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts.” [31:1-5 NIV; see also 35:31]

Now ... why does any of this matter? Our goal is to understand what Paul is getting at when he prays for the Colossian Christians to “be filled [by God] with the knowledge of [God’s] will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.” And what we learn from the Old Testament examples when two of those words come together in the life and writing of Solomon, is that these gifts are supposed to lead to practical results. But then, in Exodus and Isaiah, when all three concepts come together, we get a clearer picture of what kind of practical results these gifts were supposed to produce. Bezalel was gifted by God to perceive the heavenly tabernacle, and then to make it an earthly reality. His skill – his gift – lay not just in contemplating the heavenly tabernacle, and not just in devising an earthly tabernacle, but in understanding the heavenly one in such a way that he could make it a reality on earth. That is what we learn in Hebrews 8:5. And so that was what was meant by “wisdom,” “understanding,” and “knowledge” in that context: the ability to perceive heavenly realities and make them earthly realities.

And as we come back to Paul, we then see that that is the idea that he is setting before us as well. He writes: “from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

The kind of knowledge that Paul is praying for – that he says we must start with – is a knowledge of God’s ways, revealed to us in Christ, which we are to know, and understand, and then live in light of, taking those heavenly realities, and living them out as earthly realities, so that our lives – both individually and corporately as the Church – become earthly tabernacles: pictures of God’s heavenly ways.

The way we do this is by translating that knowledge, as Paul says in verse ten, into walking “in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

We begin simply by walking as he would have us walk, living as he calls us to live, and as is right for us to live in light of the spiritual realities of the gospel that we have already discussed. [Gupta, 45]

And as we do that, Paul says our lives will be “fully pleasing” to God. And that should take us back a bit. If we know ourselves, then we know how imperfect our Christian walk is, and how imperfect it always will be. So what are we to make of Paul’s words here? How can he say we could do things that are “fully pleasing” to God?

Well, the point Paul is making is not that we can reach perfection, but that we are able to please God with our lives if we are in Christ. [Wright, 62] In Christ our good deeds and our attempts at

faithfulness, though so often mixed with sin, are purified and accepted before God, just as we are.

The Westminster Confession, first acknowledging that our good works in this life are always defiled and imperfect then says this – it says: “Notwithstanding, the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in him; not as though they were in this life wholly unblameable and unreprouvable in God's sight; but that he, looking upon them in his Son, is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections.”

Because God is our loving Father, and because not only we, but all we seek to do in faith, is in Christ, our good works really are, and really can be, pleasing to God. And so, as we seek to walk in light of the gospel – in a way that lives out the heavenly realities revealed in Christ, here on earth – our lives can, in Christ, be “fully pleasing to” God.

And when we walk in such a way, and when God smiles on our attempts to live out what he has revealed to us in his word, it leads to bearing fruit, as we read in verse ten – fruit in the believer’s heart and fruit in the believer’s life. [Moo, 96-97; Wright, 63]

And finally, as we walk as we are called to, and as we bear fruit that is pleasing to God, Paul says in verse ten, we will also increase in our knowledge of God. Which is where the whole cycle began. [Moo, 97; Wright, 62]

And so the Christian life often looks ... and often feels ... cyclical. It often feels like we are going through the same patterns again and again. We are struggling to better grasp God’s ways, revealed to us in the Scriptures, and we are trying to apply them to our lives ... and God, in his mercy, gives us some growth, and gives us some success, and we see some fruit in our lives, and we grow in our understanding just a bit ... but then before we know it we are struggling again to apply that knowledge more to our lives, and working to bear more fruit, which leads us to again understand God in a deeper way, and so on.

We need to realize a few things about this pattern.

First, we need to realize that this cyclical pattern is deeply linked to the pattern of progress, even if we don’t see it all the time. If we forget that, then we can become discouraged. Because our Christian life can feel like we are just running in circles. But since the Christian life is not just a cycle, it’s also a life of progress, that means that the Christian life is not really circular, but instead, it’s an upward spiral. We’re not just running in futile circles, but we are ascending a great mountain on a spiral path, going around it again and again, but gaining just a bit of elevation each time. With each cycle we progress just a bit more in endurance, and patience, and joy, and thanksgiving. We come just a bit closer to the future God has for us when we receive the inheritance of the saints in light. And so first, when we see that the circular pattern is linked with the progressive pattern, we see that our spiritual life is not a pointless circle, but an upward spiral. [Wright, 62]

Second, we need to realize that this cycle too is rooted in the work and the grace of God. After all, it is God who gives the knowledge, in verse nine. Paul there uses what commentators call the divine passive – a form meant to imply that God is the one who is doing the work of filling them with the knowledge of his will. [Moo, 93] And he doesn't just do it at the start of the cycle. He is the one who does it at the end of the cycle as well. He is also the one who gives them the power to bear true fruit. And he is the one who gives us the grace, in Christ, for our good works to be accepted as pleasing in his sight. In other words, every step of this cycle is rooted in the first pattern we saw: the pattern of rescue. In each step, God is continuing what he started: rescuing us from our sin and unbelief. We do not live out this cycle on our own. We always live it out in dependence on him.

Third, we need to realize that this cycle probably gives us the best picture of what our spiritual lives look like on most ordinary days. And so it gives us a good set of goals for how to live with the challenges before us, as we take one day at a time.

The great spiritual realities of God's rescue of us from the domain of darkness are always true. But our day-to-day Christian lives don't always feel that dramatic. The progress Paul described in verses ten and eleven are always at work, but we can usually only see it when we zoom out and consider a longer season of our life. What we see most immediately, day-to-day, is the cycle. And we should embrace that.

That really is your daily charge: To pray for, and seek the knowledge of God, not in an esoteric way, but with the aim of taking what you see of him in the Scriptures – taking those heavenly realities – and making them earthly realities. And then, trusting in God's help, we are to strive to live them out – to strive to walk in a manner that reflects those spiritual realities, and in a manner that will be fully pleasing to our heavenly Father. And as God grants you success, seek to bear fruit that blesses God, that blesses others, and that blesses you. That fruit may take time. That fruit may be small. But as you produce it, let it increase your knowledge of God, even just a little bit, so that the next day you can start the cycle again.

This cycle is lived out in how we approach mundane daily tasks, how we engage in ordinary daily conversations, and how we handle our typical daily thoughts, emotions, and temptations. It is in those daily cycles that the great cosmic drama that Paul speaks of in this passage plays out, day by day.

And so let us embrace God's calling on us, living to please him, that he would prepare us for our inheritance ... for he has delivered us into his kingdom.

Amen.

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**This sermon draws on material from:**

Gupta, Nijay K. *Colossians*. Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2013.

Moo, Douglas J. *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary Series. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008.

Wright, N. T. *Colossians and Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1986.