

Dr. Daniel K. Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 2, Prayer of Thanks, Colossian 1:1-14

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This is session 2, Prayer of Thanksgiving in Colossians chapter 1:1-14.

Welcome back to the Biblical Studies lectures. We were looking at Prison Epistles, which we covered earlier on; we looked at the introduction to prison epistles generally, and we also looked at specific things that are related to Colossians. In the past lecture, we examined a few things, the issue of authorship and the context of the letter, and I clarified a few things so that we can now go into the text and begin to ask questions like, why was this letter written? What is going on? What are some of the things that we need to know to actually have a good grasp of what this letter is about? So, we'll move here quickly to begin the second lecture, looking at the purpose of the letter.

From the purpose, we'll go straight to start looking into what is going on in chapter one. So, first, let's look at the purpose of Colossians. By the way, purpose, the English word purpose, is one of those words I have had people tell me several times in America, in England, on the European side of things, in Eastern Europe, Croatia, and Bosnia. It's amazing.

They've all been telling me, you don't know how to pronounce that word. And you have to pronounce it correctly. Purpose, when I mean purpose, what I mean is P-U-R-P-O-S-E.

Okay, so the purpose of Colossians. In other words, why was the letter written? The letter was written to address some specific issues in the church. Imagine when I refer to the word church here. Let me just clarify something here.

When I refer to the word church here, don't imagine a cathedral full of people who come and meet on Sunday, and then when they come and meet on Sunday, they have some wonderful hymns such as Amazing Grace, and one of my favorite, a church to keep, I have, and a God to glorify. And then a preacher stands up and preaches wonderful sermons. Don't imagine that.

Imagine, in my reference to the church here, Christians who meet in people's homes, with the average size that we know the largest home could actually accommodate being 50. They come, they may sing, they may share a meal, they may study the scriptures, and they may encourage each other. Imagine such a church.

And as you imagine that church, imagine this church having some problems with false teaching. Some people come in to distort the message they have heard or know

about Jesus Christ. Paul writes to try to address these issues so that Christians will keep their focus.

But as we think about a false teaching, you may want to ask, what is the nature of this false teaching? Well, some scholars think by just looking at the text closely, especially chapter 2 of Colossians, one begins to observe that the letter is dealing with what they call Jewish mysticism, which is, as I use a modern language, a hybrid of some form of Judaism and paganism meshed together. If you are in Latin America, there is now something they call Santeria in some of the countries, where there is a mesh of Christianity and pagan activity, that kind of mystical activity going on, as some scholars would argue. I should say, though, that in recent years, a good number of commentators on this subject are moving away from that viewpoint.

There is an old view that the letter was written to address some Gnostic influence or Gnostic activities in the church. We have now come to understand that Gnosticism was not actually developed by the end of the 1st century. So, we could look at the emergence of Gnostic activities in the 2nd century.

So, Colossians could not be addressing Gnosticism or the Gnostic notions that we would characterize in the past scholarship as what is going on in the text. So, there is a major move in scholarship from that position. That is not to say there was no validity to that thought because if you put on a Gnostic hat and begin to look at Colossians chapter 2, you may see some features that could easily make you arrive at that conclusion.

Some have argued that the letter was written to address philosophical influence or traditions that were getting their way into Christian thinking and shaping Christian thought and behavior. Why? This is perhaps one of the weakest views on the purpose of the letter that we have in scholarship. The only reason is that the word philosophy comes up in Colossians, I think, chapter 2. And so that means some philosophy is going on. That is really not something that modern scholars buy into that much.

The most accepted and perhaps held view among scholars today is the view that Colossians was actually written to combat some form of syncretism. It sounds like the mystical thing that we're talking about there with Judaism and paganism, but now you add Christianity to it, and you have this pagan influence, Jewish influence, and all these things going on in the church, and Christians not being sure what Christianity is all about. By the way, this is a context in which pagan tradition is all over the place.

There were so many gods, there were so many, and I would like to tell you that some of the findings I have come across actually show there were a lot of magical activities. People were performing magic. They want some power to do something.

There were so many shrines in town, and the Christians somehow yielded to some of these influences. Just in case you're thinking they were not so smart, let me remind you that the philosophers were influencing that part of the world in significant ways. So, there was a lot of intellectual activity.

People were smart, so there was a potential philosophical influence as well. In the church, think about some Jews in the church and think about some non-Jews in the church. One group comes from a pagan background, and one group comes from a traditional Jewish background, and they are trying to live Christian life in this pluralistic context.

Clint Arnold, I should say, first, maybe I should establish a disclaimer. Clint Arnold is now the dean of Tabard School of Theology at Biola University. Clint's argument is now what is held to be the most, perhaps the best explanation, I should put it, to describe what is going on in the letter.

Clint is the one who proposed this syncretistic view to us. And Clint has this to say, which, interestingly, you may find many commentators quoting this same sentence that I have here on the screen for you. The Colossian philosophy does represent a combination of Phrygian folk belief, local folk Judaism, and Christianity.

The local belief has some distinctive Phrygian qualities, but it also has much in common with what we could also describe as magic or ritual power. The Judaism of the area had already been influenced by these local beliefs and practices. Conversely, the magical substructure of Anatolian Judaism had already made its own contribution to pagan beliefs and practices.

With the proclamation of the Christian community out of the converted Jews and pagans, a controversy arose in the church a few years later over the practices and beliefs of an emerging fashion within the church. The philosophy, in the strongly held opinion of the Apostle Paul, compromised too much with the surrounding religious environment. Paul saw this syncretistic compromise, and I should say, Clint Arnold, in the book, actually wrote these words and titled it with the word syncretism in the title.

Paul sees this as a dangerous compromise and, therefore, sought to address this issue. So, as far as the purpose is concerned, let's look at it this way—problems in the church.

I don't think about in America or in elsewhere in the world where we have this. Now, to the American audience, you think about New York City or somewhere in some of the smaller towns in Pennsylvania, where I discovered recently that there are a lot of weekend activities. So you have the weekend, you have some other things, you have

some palm reading, you have, and some people want to experience something more of God.

So, they are trying to have all these things dabbing, and they want to bring it into their Christian experience as well. Those coming, those who are following this from the African context, you all, maybe Latin American context, you are aware that actually a lot of Christians still consult pagans for all kinds of things and still think they can go on with their Christian life. So, imagine Paul addressing these issues in the community of believers where these are becoming such a problem to contaminate the true content of the truth, namely the gospel.

But who and where were these false teachers coming from? Is it a false teaching that going from outside is trying to bring things to the church? Is it from inside or what? Well, you can put it on three fingers. If we think about one specific heresy, it will be very difficult to establish that in Colossians to say, there's this one specific heresy that is going on here. And so, Clint Arnold's argument for syncretistic tendencies is more bought in scholarship.

As far as where the people are coming from, the evidence seems to point more towards insiders. In other words, people in the church who are trying to dab into philosophy, paganism, folk religions, and all that have some high level of spiritual experience. One should be reminded that when we say syncretistic activity, and we try to explain it, we can't use simplistic language to explain this as if we have all the details of the nature of the false teaching.

One thing for certain: the Christians were being deceived. They were being deceived to follow teachings that were not compatible with the gospel. Their surrounding religious and philosophical thoughts seem to be influencing their Christian activities.

Paul needed to address that and to help them in a genuine walk with God. When we look at how these false teachers are depicted in the letter itself, we become more aware of who they are and what they are doing. And here, I defer to a colleague who teaches at Wheaton College, Douglas Moon, who has written a very nice commentary on Colossians and outlined his observations from chapter 2. You may see here that in chapter 2, verse 8, the false teaching is a hollow and deceptive philosophy.

It depends on human tradition. It depends on or engages in elemental spiritual forces of this world, a specific notion we will look at later. It does not depend on Christ.

This is important in Colossians. Because it departs from Christ, Paul has to establish with clarity that Christ is the center of everything that we should believe and hold on to as Christians. This false teaching calls for dietary restrictions and abstinence from Jewish holidays.

It promotes some form of ascetic discipline, verses 18 and 23. It focuses attention on angels. It advocates for visionary experience.

It has some pride component to it. In verse 18, Paul writes that they are puffed up without reason by the ascentious minds. It has no grounding in Christ, and its connection to the head is not stable. And these false teachers promote worldly rules.

That should give you an idea about the complexity of the false teaching, the kind of effect it was having in the church, and how it is shaping people's thoughts and behavior. So if we know this about the church to whom the letter we call Colossians was written, what general themes do we see in this letter before we look at verse 1? The theological themes I may highlight for you includes what we call the Christ hymn or major cosmic Christology we'll look at in chapter 1, verse 15 to 20. We have what scholars call Rallies eschatology.

One of the things I like about this letter, as you would find in a discussion on Prison Epistles, is the emphasis on knowledge, knowing, and learning as a necessity for Christian maturity so that Christians will be able to know, understand, and live the life that is worthy of those who call themselves followers of Christ. One of the key themes that is not really highlighted in scholarship but which forms a major part of my own contribution to scholarship in the disputed Pauline letters is household relations in these letters. So we see these major themes, but you also want to take note of what you may find sometimes even in the titles of books or commentaries on Colossians that is the Christology, the high Christology, Christ the center, Christ the supreme, Christ the creator, and the means to reconciliation with human beings and God and the need to hold on and be connected to the head still Christ so that Christians can live the life that is expected of us.

Now, you may want to take your Bible. A lot has been said without picking up the Bible, so take your Bible. You can have whatever translation you like.

Preferably, if you have some translations like NIV, ESV, NRSV, and all that, then you may follow the reading I'm reading. I'm actually reading from ESV this time. Let's begin to look at the letter. You may be telling yourself wow, so scholars, I mean, you spend all this time before you even start looking at it's so simple.

Yeah, I used to think that way, too, but it helps to know some of these things so that as you get into the letter, you can embrace what the letter stands for and be open to learning from what the word of God has to teach us. As we read and look at the first few verses of the letter, we come across these lines. Paul, the apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy, our brother to the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae.

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father. Let me just try to unpack a few things here. Normally, we skip some of these greetings as if they are so easy, so we don't really have to worry so much about what they have to convey or teach us, but note that the one who identifies himself as the author is Paul but he also wants to make sure that for the church that does not know him they actually know something about him and his relationship to the central figure that they would need to know more about in this letter.

He is an apostle. He is an apostle of Christ Jesus. He is someone who is sent by, excuse me, Jesus Christ.

He has no message on his own, and he has no mission on his own. He transacts business in the name of the one who sent him. So the word *apostolos* or apostle can mean the one who is sent or a title of someone who has known and followed Christ as a leader as we know, for instance of the apostles so Paul describes himself as an apostle, a person who is sent or one who has the title as a person a prominent person who has followed Jesus Christ has seen his work has spent time with him.

Remember, Paul talks about his personal experience with Jesus on his way to Damascus, but that is not enough in the way Paul identifies himself. He wants to establish not only his relationship with Christ Jesus as an apostle but as far as dealing with God his apostleship is by the will of God. He legitimizes his role and his position as someone who acts in the wishes of God.

You don't want to lose sight of that as you read this letter because by establishing his authority with such clarity, he's actually showing these believers that his personal standing with Christ is intact. He functions and performs and writes and sends the message so that they would all understand what the will of Christ, which is a shared conviction, is regarding the issue of false teaching in the church, and he says I write this with Timothy. Timothy is our brother.

Timothy is our brother. Timothy is not your brother. Timothy is not someone else's brother, but Paul uses what we call fictive kinship here.

We see ourselves as a family of God, and by putting himself in that family, he's telling the readers though we have not met or some of you may not have met me personally, we are all brothers and sisters, and I want you to know that Timothy the one who writes with me is also our brother having shared conviction and shared faith in Christ Jesus and then Paul will go on to greet the church which is very standard in ancient letter writing. He greets them, and it's very interesting to look at how he greets them or calls them. This is a church that has some problems, right? This is a church in which some are yielding to false teaching right? Well, Paul calls them saints to the saints who are in crisis to the holy ones, literally translated in Greek.

By the way, being a saint here does not mean papal beatification. It doesn't mean the pope has to make someone a saint. Paul used that to refer to those who had been redeemed once they were all sinners when they encountered Christ Jesus as he will say in chapter one, something happened by the blood of his work on the cross their sins were forgiven, and so they had become holy ones he could refer to them as saints in Christ Jesus.

He also calls them brothers,, and he calls them faithful brothers, which is striking. So far, they are showing signs of unfaithfulness in their standing with Christ and in allowing certain things to come into the church, but Paul sees the grand picture, the bigger picture. These are saints in Christ Jesus.

They are still holding on to the faith. Do they have some internal issues? Yes, but they are saints. They are faithful, and he will not distance himself from them.

They are brothers and sisters, as Timothy mentioned earlier in the first line. To say they are faithful has both ethics and place or to say they are faithful is to say they are faithful in their work with God or they are faithful in the way they actually conduct themselves. Even their faithfulness in God will also show that as far as their place in God is concerned, they are deemed faithful ones.

Greetings. Greetings, my dear friends. Greetings to the saints.

Greetings to the brothers and greetings specifically to those who are in Colossae. Paul goes on to say grace to you. Grace to you. Peace from God, and this God I'm talking about is our Father.

Grace to you. For Paul, grace is not a simple word of charity. Paul, who was once a persecutor of the Lord Jesus Christ, encountered him on the road to Damascus, and there he saw what God would decide to do to him instead of spanking him on the head and holding his hair if he had some hair on his head and pick him up and punish him and say hey Paul you thought you could persecute me right? God showed him grace.

Grace will become a theological word in Paul. It becomes a reminder of what God has done to us who did not deserve his mercy. In that spirit, in that note, he sends greetings and grace to you.

Peace from God. Peace carries a sense of well-being. Peace is not peacekeeping.

Peace from the one who is the Prince of Peace. The one who can give peace from the inside out. Peace to you and this peace comes from our Father.

Look at how kinship language features in the first two verses of Colossians. Timothy is described as our brother. The church members are described as brothers and God is described as our Father.

So here even in these two verses, Paul has already established a family of God with real family issues to be addressed in the ensuing pages. We are family. Our Father is God.

We are brothers and sisters. So, let's deal with the issues that will help us to be faithful people loyal to the family honor and the family dignity in the ancient Mediterranean framework. One of the scholars, James Dunn, pointed out that when we think about peace in these greetings, we don't want to take peace for granted.

It is such a rich word that we need to appreciate as we look at some of these greetings. Dunn writes that the richness of the Jewish greeting peace or shalom should not be lost sight of since it denotes not simply the cessation of war but all that makes for well-being and prosperity in the absence of war and not simply individual or inner peace but also the wholeness of harmonious relationships. Peace from God our Father, Paul writes.

In the next paragraph, from verse 3 to verse 8, Paul will say thanks and pray, and I'd like to read that. We always thank God for the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ when we pray for you since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints because of the hope laid up for you in heaven of this you have heard before the word of the truth of the gospel which has come to you as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing as it is also as it also does among you since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth just as you learn it from Epaphras the beloved fellow servant he is faithful minister of Christ on your behalf and has made known to you to us your love in the spirit. Let's look at these few verses from verses 3 to 8 in the next few minutes, and I'd like to post four windows that we should use to look into this text.

In other words, there are four questions that could help us to look at this briefly. One, to whom was thanksgiving due? Two, what news prompted thanksgiving or prayer? And three, how did they know about or what actually enhanced the development of some special qualities that Paul outlines? And fourth, who are the Epaphras that Paul talks about? I like these few verses, and this morning, actually, I was struck by just looking at these verses again and how rich the passage is. We always thank God for you, and I will pause to say if you have time, look at how many times Wes's head appears in chapter one alone.

Hope appears in chapter one alone, and that is something you can just take time to look at and enjoy this chapter. But let's get to the first question to whom was thanksgiving due? In chapter 3, chapter 1 verse 3 to 8 thanksgiving is due to God and

not something else it is due to God our the father of our Lord Jesus Christ. So, notice something that has already happened in just a few verses that is less than four verses into the letter.

Timothy is our brother, the saints are brothers, God is our father, and this God who is our father is also the father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are siblings with Jesus Christ. What great news. It is to this God that thanksgiving is due because of what he will do in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's not lose sight of another important word here, Lord. Our master, Jesus Christ, is the one to whom we humble ourselves in obedience to his instructions. The Lord Jesus Christ, whom we will be told is the means of our salvation. He was there before creation, and all kinds of things, and the benefits we have as Christians came through him.

We should give thanks to God, who is his father. Second question, or window, as I call it. What prompted the thanksgiving and prayer? We always thank God the father of our Lord Jesus Christ when we pray for you.

Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, we have also heard of your love for all the saints, and it is because of the hope you have. So, as Paul thinks about their faith in Christ Jesus, their love for one another, and because of the hope they have, there is every reason to give thanks to God. But why should this be happening when in fact I told you earlier on that there was false teaching in the church people were having all these syncretistic activities and yet Paul is trying to have all this wonderful picture.

No this is where Christians need to understand. It doesn't mean the church was a perfect church they just have the fundamentals right but they had some issues in the church. It is also possible that Paul was reminding them about some areas they are good at so that when he hits on what they are not good at it will not go to ouch sound.

What prompted thanksgiving and prayer? It is their faith in Christ, their love for the saints and because of the hope they have in Christ. Third question and perhaps before that let me remind you about a friend a very good Catholic scholar who teaches in Canada Margaret Macdonald who thinks we shouldn't take the word hope for granted. Margaret writes hope here has a special significance.

It is less an attitude to foster than an object to be seized. In essence the term functions as a synonym for eternal life. We have a place that is unambiguous.

It is clear we are not hoping for something that does not exist. We are hoping for something that is concrete that we can possess eternal life. But how did they come

to these qualities? How did they have that faith, love, and hope that is talked about? Well came through the gospel, the word of truth.

From verse 4, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and a love for the saints because of the hope laid out for you in heaven of this you have heard before the word of truth the gospel which has come to you as indeed the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing. The gospel is one of the means by which they actually had access and the resources to develop these qualities. We may have to sit back and say that maybe this is a little bit of exaggeration to say that the gospel is in the whole world.

Yes, I agree that Paul is not just saying I went through the globe; I pick up the world geography in my office, and then I circle what the gospel has gone here. No, he's just trying to make an expression that says the gospel has spread to the known world, and that is the kind of gospel he's talking about, and this is somebody who is responsible for sending the message to so many parts of the world. They have learned all this from one man called Epaphras.

So, it's worth noting that we need to know something about this man called Epaphras. I have often asked the question that I will skip here. To what extent do you see credibility as an important part of forming a case for a church that is dealing with false teaching? And if you want to pause to think about this, think about how the letter is beginning; think about how Paul establishes himself think about how he described the one on whose behalf he turns out business look at how he describes the saint. Look at how he establishes a relationship between him and the saints in the way he used kinship language look at the adjectives he used to qualify the gospel truth for instance and see how it is important to establish credibility to address real issues and then he could tell you that indeed if you had the gospel of truth you probably had it from the right guy Epaphras.

Epaphras, we are told from verse 7, you learn it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister in Christ on your behalf and he has made known to us your love in the spirit. As we're in this letter, we'll get to know more about Epaphras.

Epaphras was someone Paul was sent with Timothy to do various things. Paul is even a witness of his work in the Lycos Valley. It is on this basis Paul could actually make a strong claim about Epaphras and his standing.

From here, he will switch on and actually pray from verse 9 for the church. And so, as I read from the ESV, 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. May

you 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 what? In the light.

Why? Because verse 13, he has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son in whom we have redemption and forgiveness of sins. In this prayer, I just highlight a few things here for you. Note the prayer for knowledge for the church that is being misled.

It is an important prayer wish for Paul that they may be filled with knowledge. They may know. I like to tell some of my audience, and I do have an opportunity here and there to talk to Pentecostals and Charismatics.

I like to say being knowledgeable is not unspiritual because when false teaching is infiltrating the church, the community of faith needs to be granted knowledge, and the faith that the believers should have should be a reasoned faith, something that is processed intellectually, grounded in solid knowledge of the truth. Paul prays exactly for the church to be filled with knowledge, not just knowledge but knowledge of his will. He said he is an apostle by the will of God, and he prays that they may be filled with the knowledge of his will.

Interestingly, he prays for knowledge and actually impacts in specific areas that they may have spiritual wisdom, the ability to grasp the concept, and to process and transmit it in real life. Spiritual wisdom counts for spiritual development, especially when false teachers are around you when there are all kinds of ungodliness around you. We are recording these lectures actually in Massachusetts, where we have the least church parts in the United States.

When you live the Christian life in such a context, you want to be prepared for all that comes, and for that, Paul's prayer comes true. One needs to be filled with knowledge of spiritual wisdom and in understanding so that faith that is lived out is a reasoned faith. Paul prays specifically in the area of conduct as well that they may walk worthy of the Lord.

In the midst of false teaching and false teachers' influence, it really matters that Christians live Christian lives. Christian integrity counts in the world of darkness. The world must know that Christians do things differently.

In fact, to be a Christian is to be a follower of Christ. Praying for conduct, he prays that they may be fully pleasing to God because in a culture of honor and shame, if their conduct does not conform to the God to whom they call father, they are an embarrassment to the family. It matters that they live good Christian life, that they might bear fruit.

I like that because elsewhere, we find in Galatians Paul will use this same metaphor of bearing fruit to refer to what the spirit can do in the lives of individuals. It's not as though when the spirit is working inside you, you just stop and burst in prayer. No, when the spirit is at work in you, part of what happens is you are able to bear the fruit of the spirit, which is ethics.

Christian living is important amidst the influence of false teachers, and Paul prays specifically for that. He also prays that they might increase, not that they don't have any knowledge, they have knowledge, but that they might increase in knowledge. Learning.

The fact that you are choosing to learn in this biblical study series is actually a way to increase your knowledge of Christ. That is a good thing. Paul also prays for spiritual strength.

He prays, using what we call the divine passive, that they may be strengthened. They may be strengthened, and God would give them that ability to have that strength that is needed. And it's strength needed, not that they can fight each other in the church, but so that they can endure the challenges that they are facing, all the challenges that will come later, that they will learn to be patient just in case things they have believed in God tarry or does not come in the very time they expect to see a specific outcome.

He prays for spiritual strength. And then he prays for their demeanor. He prays that, in fact, there must not be grumpy people in the church, but that they might be filled with joy of gratitude.

Verse 11: May you 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.

Give thanks. Give thanks. Verse 12: Give thanks for the assets that you have.

The assets and the enablement to participate in the inheritance of the saints. The inheritance of the saints is not about to unfold. The inheritance for the saints in Colossians is real.

It is there. You are a part. You are a child of God who has an inheritance in God.

Give thanks to God for that assets and participation. Give thanks to God for the deliverance he has offered. Verse 13, I'd like to draw attention to the end of verse 13.

Whatever translation you have, you'll notice that when he talked about the inheritance of the saints, he said he has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints. There are two words there that almost seem immaterial, but they are really important. He has done all these things in light or in the light so that he can contrast in verse 13.

He has delivered you, or he has delivered us from the domain of darkness, contrasting the light and the benefits in the light. He took us from the darkness, and the word is he delivered us from darkness, and he transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son. The world that is filled with the activities of the dark forces, as we will see later in this letter, is the world from which we are taken, saved in Christ, and brought into the kingdom of just nobody of his beloved son.

Let's give thanks to God. Let's be filled with gratitude for what God has done. It is in this vein that Paul will best in the spirit of praise and then give what we will call the Christ hymn.

You know, I don't know how you have thought about your work and your standing with God. But I just want to pause here to highlight how this may relate tangibly in our real life today. All of us face some challenges in our work with God.

As Christians, we want to be reminded that facing those challenges does not make us less of Christians. Otherwise, Paul would not even pray for endurance. We want to be aware of the kind of prayer Paul had for us, and perhaps that could be a part of our prayer that we may be strengthened.

We may be filled with knowledge. We may be positioned in the right place and be filled with thanks for actually being who God wants us to be regardless of all the challenges that are around us. This is a letter that is going to address the influence of false teaching.

But look at what a beautiful reminder, a beautiful reminder of what Christ has done. I like the words he has transferred to us. He has transferred us.

Have you ever had a bad job? Have you ever hated your boss? Have you ever thought this is so horrible to be in? Just imagine being transferred from that place to the best place for your dream job. He took us from darkness in Colossians, and he brought us into the kingdom of his beloved son. Let's be filled with gratitude.

Let's put things into perspective. God has not left his own, and so the church finds itself with all kinds of confusion and division and falsity, and somebody says I know this more or I have heard some new teaching. This is the best thing to do.

Let us be reminded we have inheritance, and as I said earlier, go through this letter and begin to underline the word hope and appreciate what you have in Christ. Underline the word learn in chapter one of Colossians. I think you may come across about four or so times the word is used and understand the necessity to learn, and I hope and pray that as you begin to delve into this letter, you may just pause with gratitude.

You may be filled with the strength that is needed not just to be a scholar for brain exercise but also to be one who is able to transfer what is learned into a life conduct that is pleasing to God. When we come back, I will draw your attention to how Paul sets this framework and then burst into the praise of Christ, the one who is responsible, the one God brought in the midst to make all this happen. Scholars actually refer to that particular pericope or paragraph as the Christ hymn.

We will look at that when we come back. I hope you are in the course of learning something with us in this biblical study series. Thank you.

This is session number two, Prayer of Thanksgiving in Colossians chapter 1, verses 1 through 14.