

# Progress of Redemption #11

by David Shirley

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*The epistles provide a new relationship with the risen Savior and the source of all new life, and they deal with every problem that believers will face.*

**Duration:** 1:16:10

**Scripture:** 2 Peter 1:2

**Topics:** "Redemption"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the importance of living according to the teachings of the Bible. He highlights the books of James, Peter, Colossians, and Philippians as examples of how Christians should live their lives. The preacher emphasizes the authority and imperatives found in the book of James, urging believers to follow its teachings. He also emphasizes the new relationship and fellowship believers have in Christ, as described in Colossians. Finally, the preacher discusses the attitude of Christ as exemplified in Philippians, encouraging believers to humble themselves and participate in spreading the Gospel.

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## Transcript

We come now to the sixth major time God spoke, the epistles from Romans to Jude. Jesus had said of the Holy Spirit, He shall lead you into all truth. And that's what the epistles are about.

And then He shall show you things to come. And that's what the revelation of Jesus Christ written by the Apostle John is about. But this week we will look at the epistles, the acts proclaimed Jesus Christ from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria to the world.

And now the epistles explain Jesus Christ, the Christian life. And I don't know how you would describe in your own words, the epistles, but I would describe them as the voice of the Spirit within the church to those who are within the church. They have the same authority as the Gospels and the Acts did.

They're more associative and educational, but they are from that teacher, the Holy Spirit. And while the Gospels and the Acts were linked together in that the Gospels commence the teaching of Jesus and the Acts continue the teaching of Jesus. But in the epistles, what's changed? Well, the method has, because Jesus said He is with you, the Holy Spirit, but He will be in you and He will come upon you.

Now this affected everything. It affected the preaching, the person who died, the person who rose again, the person who is sitting at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, the person Jesus Christ is now

working in His living epistles and coming upon them. And so as we look into the epistles, we'll see that they give meaning and application to the life, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as well as the prophecies that concern His return.

All things are in Christ. How did Jesus put it? He said, at that day, that day when the Spirit begins to teach you, at that day you shall know that I am in the Father and you in me and I in you. And so in the epistles, we'll see all things are in Christ.

Most of the epistles are organized in such a way that the first part is doctrinal and the second part is experience. The book of Ephesians is perhaps a very clear example, chapters one through three being about doctrine and chapters four through six about experience. In keeping with our study, we want to look first at the need, then the content, then the method, and then our personal responsibility in regard to the message.

So what is the need for the epistles? We know Christ was preached to the world, but how is He taught to the church? And the need, we see, begins in Ephesians chapter one, in verse 13 and 14. It says that in Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed, you were filled in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise who is given as a pledge of our inheritance with a view to the redemption of God's own possession to the praise of His glory. And so they heard the gospel, they believed unto salvation, and they were filled with the Spirit of God, and they were filled with the Spirit of God.

And not only that, they had the gift of the Spirit. Let's read in chapter one and verse seven. Paul says, I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, so that you're not lacking in any gift, waiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, you might say, well, that sure doesn't sound like there isn't a lot of need at that point. Well, matter of fact, 1 Thessalonians chapter one and verse eight says, For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything. Well, then what's the need? Well, the need is that they might grow into maturity in what they already have.

The need is twofold. They need to understand the essential nature of salvation, to know the provision that is in Christ. And then secondly, they need to know how to work it out in life and service, to possess and use the provision that we have in Christ, to see the Christian life and its responsibilities in a practical way.

And so, the need for the epistles is to grow into the maturity of Christ, to know what we have in Christ, to possess it, and to use it to its fullest extent. So, therefore, the content of the epistles is in its foundational concept, anchored in a new relationship with the risen Savior. Life is in Christ, not in us, and the source of all this new life is not in the believer, but it's in Jesus Christ.

And we need to know how we're united with him, and that's why the phrase, in Christ, is found throughout Paul's epistles, and it captures the truth of our union with Jesus Christ. As he said, what Christ is, well, that's what we are in Christ. Romans 11, 35, of him and through him and to him are all things.

And so, we see the content is going to deal with what we have in Christ in terms of his person and what we possess and can use in terms of what he has provided through his work for us. And the epistles, as well, will deal with every problem that believers will face. There are basic issues in life that are dealt with in the book of Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians.

There are life problems that are addressed in Paul's general epistles. There are pastoral problems that are addressed in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. And as we go through, we'll see us in Christ, but we will see various problems and how they are to be faced while we're in Christ.

But let's look at a little bit of the content of the epistles. In the book of Romans, we will see that the righteousness of God is revealed. In Romans 1, 17, it says, and Christ is our righteousness.

In chapter 3 and verse 24, it speaks of all those who sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, but their being justified is a gift by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. And God has set forth Christ publicly as a propitiation in his blood through faith just was to demonstrate his righteousness. And so God is just, and he's the justifier of the one who puts faith in Jesus Christ, because Christ himself is our redemption.

And this tremendous costly price that was paid for us, not only by Christ, but now has placed us in Christ so that he actually becomes our righteousness. And God is just to forgive us because he's poured out all the penalty on Jesus Christ. So we have the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

And we're actually baptized into his death so that we're in Christ in this death. And then we're raised with Christ and made joint heirs with Jesus Christ so that nothing can separate us from that love, the love which is in Christ. And after the book of Acts leaves you at Rome, and then you read the book of Romans, you see that the righteousness of God is the thing.

In the first eight chapters, it's talking about doctrinal salvation, how God is righteous in relationship to our sin and our sins. And through his grace, we live and we do this or that. And so we get salvation from God as a gift, but then it's worked out.

We're justified. The ground is grace. The means is faith.

And the effect of it in our hearts will be assurance. But chapters 9 through 11 talks about history. It's more than just a parenthetical thing about Israel and their callings that they're elected and then rejected and then converted in the end.

It's much more than just a simple dispensational history, but it's the righteousness of God in relationship to his calling of Israel. It's the keystone, the arc of the book. It's right in the center of the epistle.

It's a true philosophy of history. And so if we divide the epistle properly, we will see God's view of Israel's place. And it has to do with the fact that God is righteous in every way to call them, to elect them, to give them his gifts and calling in an irrevocable way.

And so Israel is not only relevant, but it's vital in the outworking of redemption. And then we will move on from there to the last section of Romans, and it's about practical behavior and duties and responsibilities and how we should act. And it has to do with the righteousness of God in relationship to our everyday life.

And that's why we see even in practical matters of life, everything's brought back to Christ. In Romans 14 and verse 5, it says, One man will regard one day above another. Another will regard every day alike.

But let each one be fully convinced in his own mind, because they're going to stand before the Lord. And he who observes the day should observe it for the Lord. And he who eats should do it for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God.

And he who doesn't eat for the Lord, he ought not to eat and still give thanks to God. For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself. We live for the Lord.

If we die, we die for the Lord. So whether we live or die, we're the Lord. For to this end, Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord, both of the dead and of the living.

We're all going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. So every even practical matters of mutual toleration in life are important. And our obligation to our brother in the Lord is just that.

It's an obligation in the Lord. And our concern is not to put stumbling blocks in someone's way, because we're to walk according to the principle of love. And we don't want to stumble or hurt our brother in any way.

And we wouldn't want food or anything like that to become such a big issue that it would stumble our brother, because we're responsible and we have an obligation in the Lord. And so it's good not to eat mean or do anything, drink wine or whatever it might be, if it's going to stumble your brother. Yes, you can have faith and you can have it as your own conviction before God, but then happy is the one who doesn't condemn himself for what he approved.

So you have to ask yourself the simple question is, how does this relate to being in Christ, to being in the Lord? That's the important thing. And if you're strong in the Lord, thank God and bear the infirmities of those who are not. Don't please yourself in that, but please your neighbor, because you're in the Lord.

And our purpose is to glorify the Father through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So we're to accept one another, just as Christ has accepted us, to the glory of God. He laid down his life and we should lay our life down and it'll be to the glory of God.

And so Romans is about the righteousness of God as it's revealed in every way, doctrinally, positionally, historically, and practically. But we need to know in the epistles what our provision is and how to possess and use the provision that we have in Christ. Romans 6 is just a tremendous chapter concerning that, because he wants us to know what we have in Christ.

He says, don't you know that all who've been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death? That there's been this first phase of union in the death of Christ, and you know that death and life can't coexist, either you're alive or you're dead. And so we have been baptized into that death union with Christ, so that actually it says we have been buried with him through baptism into death. So death is a certification, it's a confirmation, particularly when you bury someone.

Then that's the end of the story. If you go to the funeral and they're buried in the ground, then you know that's they're certified and then they're buried. Well the appeal is to know and to realize by the revelation of God's spirit that he would teach us how that we have been buried.

We died when Christ died on the cross, and we really need to know this before we start to even think about walking in the newness of life that we have in Christ. Because first we're united with him in the likeness of his death, then certainly if that's true, then the next step will be true. We've risen with him in his resurrection.

We've been planted together, closely entwined, and grown up together with Christ. We're in him who is the branch, and he's in us. The vine actually lives in us.

We're partaking of him, and so we know that our old self was crucified with him. The body of sin has been done away, and so we ought not to be slaves to it. If we know it's done away, then we're freed because he who has died is freed from sin, and a dead criminal is not liable anymore for his crimes.

We're totally free from that, and so we know that Christ has died, and we know that we died, and we know that Christ has been raised from the dead. He's never going to die again. Death doesn't have any mastery over him anymore.

The death that he died, he died to sin once for all, but the life he lives, he lives to God. So we know this, first of all, and then once we know that we have the life of Christ and all the benefits of that, we can begin to reckon ourselves to actually be dead to sin. It's an imperative thing that we reckon by faith ourselves dead to the old ways and to the old life, that we must know we're dead to that through the baptism into Jesus Christ, and as well reckon ourselves alive to God through Jesus Christ.

And if we see that we're really dead and we can reckon it to be true, then we're not going to continue to let sin reign and have control and run our lives. We're not even going to let it begin to reign in our mortal bodies, and we're not going to obey the lusts that come out and say, go this way and do that, and we're not going to keep presenting and yielding the members of our body for the purpose of doing things that are wrong, and we're not instruments of unrighteousness anymore. But we will begin to present ourselves to God as those who are actually living out from among the dead, and our bodies will be the instruments for God to use for good and for righteousness, and sin won't have the mastery over us.

So we must know that we have this provision in Christ, and we must reckon it to be true, but we must yield to it, and as we yield to it and allow the Spirit of God to rest upon us and to be the strength within us, we can receive by faith all that we have in Christ and become obedient from our heart to all the things that Christ has taught us. And so it's all anchored in a new relationship that we have with the risen Savior. He's the source of our life.

We're in Christ. In the Epistle of First Corinthians, which was a corrective letter that was written to factious Christians, it says it was to the Church of God, which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord. And Paul was so upset because he says, has Christ been divided, talking about their factions, people saying, I'm a Paul, and I'm a Paulist, and I'm a Cephas, and we get divided by teachers, probably more than anything else in the Bible of Christ, and this one guy believes in this teacher, another guy likes that teacher, and it's just, it's all by teachers.

Even within the same denominations and the same fellowship, people are divided by teachers. And Paul says, wow, what is happening here? Has Christ been divided? And Paul's glad he didn't baptize any of them except one or two. And so we are to find ourselves in Christ in every way.

And he says, but by his doing, by God's doing, you're in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, everything. Christ has become everything to us, his person. And so let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.

Let Christ have the preeminence, and let him be the focus, and we'll certainly have less division, less hero worship, because Christ will be preeminently our focus and our worship. We have this tremendous blessing of Christ, and Paul says in 1 Corinthians, that we have the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood. For if they had understood it, they wouldn't have crucified the Lord of glory.

But who has known the mind of the Lord that he should instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. Being in Christ, we have the mind of Christ, which was the mind of humility, understanding that the way to the throne of glory, the way to service is through humility, so unlike what the world would expect. But we have a wisdom that's not of this world, and it usually begins with humility, because we have the mind of Christ.

And that's probably why in chapter 3, verse 20, it says, the Lord knows the reasonings of the wise. They're just useless to him. And so there's no foundation that can be laid other than the one that's already laid, and that is Jesus Christ.

We are in Christ, and Paul says in 1 Corinthians 4, in verse 4, he says, I'm conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted, but the one who examines me is the Lord. And so we're not to go on passing judgment before the time, but we're to wait until the Lord comes, because he's going to bring to light the things that are hidden, and the darkness that's disclosed is going to be brought out, even the motives of men's hearts. And then we're going to have praise from God concerning these things.

So Christ is everything. He's the foundation. Our bodies are the members of Christ, and our communion that we have with God is the blood and the body of Christ.

And if Christ is not raised, our faith is vain, but he is, and Christ is the firstfruits of those. So we have tremendous hope in Christ, but he always brings us back to solving our disorders, solving our divisions, solving our problems by focusing us on Jesus Christ, and particularly bringing us to the Lord's Supper and how he explains it in the Lordship of Jesus Christ there. And that the whole focus is all what we have in Christ, and that's what we're responsible because we have the life of Christ, and we should stay focused on him.

And then when you get to the epistle of 2 Corinthians, he talks about the sufficiency that we have in Christ Jesus. And in chapter 1 and verse 21, he says that we're in him, and now he who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also filled us and gave us the spirit in our hearts as a pledge, a down payment. And we have this because God is establishing us in Christ, and because of that, God is committed to our victory, and so we can say that thanks be to God, who always leads us in his triumph in Christ and manifests to us sweet aroma of the knowledge of him in every place.

God's victory and God's glory is involved in what he intends to do with and through us because we're in Christ, and so we can thank God. He's going to lead you in triumph in Christ, and sometimes we get to thinking, well, you know, I just don't see how it can happen with me. But the confidence, he says in chapter 3, is a confidence that we have through Christ towards God.

We know what God wants to do through Christ. We tend to look at our own sufficiency and say, where's the power going to come from? Where's the money going to come from? Where are the resources going to come from? But yet we're to look at what Christ is to God and what God is going to do through Christ. Not that we're adequate in ourselves to consider anything that's coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, and that adequacy is found in and through Jesus Christ and the new covenant that we have and the fact that his spirit gives us life and that his spirit is not a ministry of death, but it's a ministry of life, and the spirit of life in Christ Jesus will work in and through us to accomplish the very triumph of God in our lives, and we have this so freely in Christ.

No wonder Paul can go on and say, therefore, if any man is in Christ, he's a new creature, a new creation. The old's passed away. Behold, new things have come, and all these things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he's committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us. We beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. Just amazing that now what God was doing in Christ, because God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, now God is doing through us, because we're in Christ now, and Christ is in us.

We are the ambassadors for Christ, as though God were still entreating through us, and so we beg people on behalf of Christ to be reconciled to God. God is just so good and loving towards people. He doesn't count their trespasses against them.

He just loves them, and he has found a way to righteously forgive them and free them and bring them to himself, and it's so simple. It's through his son, Jesus Christ, but in 2 Corinthians as well, Paul's able to say, I'm afraid, lest the serpent that deceived thee by his craftiness, your mind should be led astray from the simplicity and the purity of devotion to Christ.

When you think of Jesus Christ and what God is doing through him, all of a sudden, it's just very simple, and it's not complicated at all because of what we have in Christ, and we can even be weak if it's weak in Christ, because when we're weak, then the power of Christ can dwell in us, and that's why Paul said he could be well-contented with his weaknesses, or, you know, if he's insulted or he's in some kind of a distress or a persecution, whatever it might be going on, he knows that it's God's will in Christ to strengthen him and to manifest the victory right there, even in his flesh, as weak as it is, and so he says, when I'm weak, I'm strong, and I might be a nobody, but Christ is a somebody, and Christ gives me the strength to go on, but Christian life is just simply a relationship

with Jesus Christ, and so it becomes the only real test of our Christian faith, and he says Christ was crucified because of weakness, yet he lives because of the power of God, and we also are weak in him, yet we live with him, we're going to live with him because of the power of God, so test yourselves, he says in first Corinthians 13 5, test yourselves to see if you're in the faith, examine yourselves, or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Christ Jesus is in you, unless indeed you fail the test, so the only real test is, is Christ in you, do you have a strength that's not your own, are you able to do all things through that strength which is Christ, and can you rejoice in him when you're weak, and let him make you strong, the test is whether Christ is in us, and if we're in

Christ, then he is in us, and then when we look at the epistle to Galatians, and we see that Christ is our liberator, and it explains how Christ has freed us, Paul begins to talk about how people have come in to spy out the liberty that they have in Christ Jesus, they want to bring him back into bondage, and yet he says we have tremendous liberty in Christ, we've got new citizenship papers, and even if we were born on foreign soil, so to speak, we can become citizens of the heavenlies, and we have in Christ, and we've done this through the grace that's in Christ Jesus, we didn't do it through the law, or keeping the law, and we've become the friends of Jesus Christ, as Jesus said, I don't call you servants anymore, but I'm calling you friends, because we've got this new relationship here

with him, and Paul's able to say in Galatians 2:20, I'm crucified, I've been crucified with Christ, it's no longer I who's living, it's Christ that's living in me, the life that I'm now living in the flesh, I'm living by faith in the son of God, he's the one that loved me, and he delivered himself up for me, and so I'm not nullifying the grace of God, because if righteousness could have come through the law, then Christ would have died needlessly, and that's not the case, Christ is the one who justly lives by faith in God, and Christ is the end of the law to everyone that believes on so it's just and right for me to believe on Christ, and to know that I'm dead to myself, and I was buried with Christ, and now the life that is in me is the life of Christ, and so it's a life of the spirit

that Christ has given us, Paul actually calls the Galatians foolish, because they had left liberty for bondage, and he thought that was just ridiculous that they would do that, because they began by the spirit, and he said if God's providing you the spirit, is God doing the miraculous things among you by the works of the law, is he doing it by the hearing of faith, and we know it was by the spirit, and verse 14 tells us that Christ had redeemed us from the curse of the law, he became the curse for us, because it's written curses everyone who hangs on a tree, so that in Christ the blessing of Abraham could come to the Gentiles, and it did in Christ the blessing of Abraham came to the Gentiles, because Christ is the seed, he's the promise seed that was promised to Abraham, so that we might

receive the promise of the spirit through faith, what a blessing to receive that promise of the spirit, and then he knew people were going to say well then why the law, and it was it was a tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we would see Christ came with grace and truth, a higher law, and the most wonderful law, and so because you are sons of God, God has sent forth the spirit of the son in your heart, crying Abba father, and it's no longer a long distance relationship, but as you're accepted in Jesus Christ the beloved son, and all the promises that that God has in Christ, or yea and amen, then you have this really close relationship with God, because the spirit of God is in you, and so we're free, so that we can walk in the spirit, it was for freedom Christ set us free, so we could keep

you know just following God as the spirit would lead us, and so we walk in the spirit, and we don't desire to walk in the flesh, and we don't fulfill the desires of the flesh, because the flesh is always going to be against the spirit, and the spirit is going to be against the flesh, and you know there's thousands of religions, and groups out in the world, and they all pretty much agree on one point, and that is there's some form of, but we see that self-effort is not what unites us, except it shows that we can't please God, but Christianity comes along, and says no it's not self-effort that's the answer, but it's the fact that Christ has done everything for you, and now if you'll receive Christ, Christ will come, and he'll live in you, and he'll be the life in you, and uh and that's

what he's talking about this freedom of the spirit, so that then we can be led by the spirit, and not be under the laws of system in that sense, and as we're experiencing that life of the spirit within us, then there'll be

fruit, it'll just come naturally, and all of a sudden you notice there's there's love in you, that you didn't have before, and it's a natural thing, because it's Christ wanting to love in you, it's his spirit desiring to love, there's joy, even when things aren't going that great, there's a tremendous joy, and there's peace, everyone can be fallen apart, and somehow you have peace in Christ, and you want things to happen, and be perfect, and come together right now today, but it doesn't, and for some reason you're able to have patience, and to wait for it to take place,

and instead of being all ruffled, and and just angry, and hard to get along with, you're kind during this time, and you do that which is good, and you just hang in there, and be faithful in every way, and you don't yell at people, you're gentle, and you have a control that you never had over yourself before, it's the spirit, because there's no law above the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, it set us completely free, so that we can walk in him, and if we live by the spirit, then we're gonna walk by the spirit, and it's just, it's exciting to know what we have in Christ there, now everybody's not going to be perfect, there's going to be problems, and some people are going fall into sin, they're not going to walk in the spirit, but let's say somebody does, then if you're spiritual, and you're

walking in the spirit, Paul says then restore such a one, one that's caught in a trespass, one that's fallen into sin, then you go restore them in the spirit of gentleness, and look to yourself, because you can be tempted too about it, we're to bear one another's burdens like this, this is the law of Christ, and the word to restore here, where people fall in to trespasses again, is the word it literally means to set in joint, like a bone that's been dislocated, it has to be set back into the joint, and once it's set into the joint, then it can begin to function again, and you know, it may hurt a little bit, there may be some pain, and you work it out, but pretty soon you're using that limb again, just like you always used it, and it's a very valuable thing, and that's the way Christians

are, who get caught up in trespasses and sin, and those that are spiritual will restore and set them back in joint, show them their usefulness in Christ, and fulfill the law of Christ that way, but it only comes when you're walking in the spirit, if you're walking in the flesh, and looking up the law and stuff, then you're just going to go out and condemn them, and so sow to the spirit, because if you sow to the spirit, you're going to reap life, and Paul closes Galatians with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, be with your spirit, and that's so neat, we began in the spirit, and the spirit of the son is in us, we have the fruit of the spirit, and we sow to the spirit, and the grace of the spirit should be in our spirit, it's very personal, and I just hope that you're studying the

epistles, and seeing what you have in Christ, and how much Christ wants to work in and through you in every way, and if you don't see that happening in others, do what Paul did, he said in chapter 4 there, that he was in travail, he was in labor, in prayer, just praying that Christ would be formed in people, and it wouldn't be circumcision or uncircumcision, but it'd just be faith, working through love, that it would be a new creation, even Christ.

Now, Ephesians, I'm not even going to look at Ephesians, there's so much in Christ in Ephesians, it's just amazing, I think 48 times it says in Christ Jesus, 34 times it says in Christ, and 50 times in the Lord, like 132 times, it's all in Christ, we are saints in Christ, and therefore, because we're saints in Christ, which he gives us all that we are and have in the first three chapters of Ephesians, sit down and read it for yourself, then chapters 4 through 6 have to do with how we ought to walk, we ought to walk worthy, and we ought to walk in a worthy manner, since we have all this in Christ, then we should walk in a manner that's worthy of Christ, and then in Philippians, we see just a tremendous missionary letter, a letter of joy, a letter about the

gospel and how it's going out,

and the attitude that we should have is the attitude of Christ, and Philippians chapter 2 explains this attitude, it shows how that Christ actually became the gospel, because we're to have this attitude in ourselves, which was also in Christ Jesus, who although he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men, and being found in an appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross, he became the good news, he went to the ultimate point of obedience, therefore also God highly exalted him, bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow at those who are

in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, and so he's shown us that in Christ, we're to say not like what Satan said, I will ascend, but I will descend, the spiritual principle being whoever exalts self shall be abased, and whoever humbles self shall be exalted, so we humble ourselves under that mighty hand of God, and God exalts us in due time, so Paul, you know, saw that Christ became the gospel, and in Philippians, he's so excited about his participation in the gospel with other people, how he can defend and confirm the good news about Jesus, and the progress of the gospel, everything that happened in his life was seen in terms of how it progressed, and how it influenced and helped the

gospel, and the good news about Jesus to go out, he was appointed for the defense of the gospel, and he said, you know, and his only really strong plea with those people was only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel, the gospel of Christ, and he wants to come finding them standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, so Paul can say truly for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain, you know, he counts all rubbish, all loss, so that he can gain Christ, and he knows that he can do all things through Christ, and that God will supply all of his needs according to his riches, God's riches and glory in Christ Jesus, so we see that in terms of the gospel, and in terms of joyful Christian living, it can't even exist apart from the

gospel, the joy in life has to do with how we're related to the good news about Jesus, and how we're involved in getting the good news out, if you're not that joyful, you might think about that, just how are you involved in getting the gospel out, you'll never be more filled with joy than when you're giving, it's so blessed to give, and if you can go out and give the greatest gift in all eternity, the good news about Jesus, then you'll be filled with joy, now in Colossians, we see that Christ is our life, and that we're complete in Christ, that there's a new position, there's a new relationship, and there's a new fellowship in Christ, he's delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son, and so our relationship is new, because it's in the

son, in his beloved son, we're accepted, and a whole new relationship opens up for us toward God, because of our acceptance in his beloved son, we're showered with the love that he puts on his beloved son, and in him we have redemption, the forgiveness of sin, so that there's a new fellowship with him, because there is no sin, and the way is open for that fellowship, and it's all because of the new position that we've had, and that's why he says give thanks to the father, he qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light, we have this tremendous position in Christ Jesus, and we're complete in him, he's our wisdom, and it's just great, it's all in Christ, Christ in you is the hope of glory, and your life is hid with Christ in God, as much as Christ is in God, your life is

hid with Christ, and that's in God, what a hope we have with Christ in us, and so let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, and as he does, we admonish one another in psalms and hymns, and those of the spirit, just singing to the Lord with grace in our hearts, because we're complete in Christ, and nothing needs to be added to it in any way, we should enjoy more our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and what we have in him, and first Thessalonians, we see Christ is the coming one, matter of fact, every chapter closes with a reference to the second coming of Jesus Christ, read the five chapters there in first Thessalonians, and see what hope is there, and he speaks about the conduct that Christians ought to have as well, in the light of that hope, there in first Corinthians, and we have

tremendous comfort, because the dead in Christ are going to rise first, and so in everything, give thanks, even if it involves death, then give thanks, because the dead in Christ will rise first, this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you, that because you're in Christ Jesus, and you're more than a conqueror because of that, and your hope is so tremendous, and Christ is returning, then in everything, you can just give thanks, it's God's will, because you're in Christ Jesus, and it concerns you, everything that happens to you, concerns you in reference to the fact that you're in Christ Jesus, so give thanks in everything in life, you can't do that really, unless you know you're in Christ, and that you have the love of God, and that he loves you, in his beloved son, he's working

all these things out, and the wisdom is in Christ, so just give thanks, and in second Thessalonians, we see that the Lord is returning, he speaks of the day of the Lord, but there's still comfort in Christ, even though he's coming in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that obey not the gospel, and don't know the Lord, there's tremendous comfort for us, and we guard the gospel, we suffer for it, we continue in it, and we continue to proclaim the gospel, because we know Christ is returning.

Now in first Timothy, Christ is our teacher, and we know our calling, we know how to behave in the church of God, in God's house, and God explains to us in first Timothy 3 15 and 16, how we are to live in his house, how we're to function in his house, and so he explains pretty much what he wants us to be, and what he wants us to do in first Timothy, and we make that good confession that Christ made, that truly there's no kingdom but his, and those that are of the truth hear his voice, there's no power but from God, and so as Christ is the teacher, and Christ is the pastor, he mentions faith and love which is in Christ Jesus, and that we're to be good ministers of Christ Jesus, and again in second Timothy, he'll do the same thing, he mentions faith and love which is in Christ Jesus,

because Christ is our example, and that's his method of discipleship, we see Christ, and we follow him, we're good soldiers, we endure the hardness that's in this world, because all who live godly in Christ Jesus are going to suffer persecution, so be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus, just remain in your calling, yes if you receive Jesus Christ, things aren't necessarily going to go hunky-dory, they're not going to be perfect all the time, you're going to have problems, and yet you need to know that Christ has left you an example, watch him, he suffered, and so we should endure the same kind of hardness, we should hang in there and remain, we've seen the end of Job haven't we, and how pitiful, and how much God blessed Job at the end of his life, it gives God tremendous

pleasure to be able to look at your life no doubt, and to say about you what he said about Job, have you considered my servant so and so, because he's faithful, he knows I love him, and he's settled in the faith and love which is in Christ Jesus, he knows if I gave my son Christ Jesus, how will I not freely give everything, and so he looks at my son, and he follows his example, and he denies himself, and takes up his cross, and he follows on to know the Lord, and if I were to slay him, he'd still trust me, well that

example of Christ is also ours, and it's given to us not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, and then Titus tells us about more so how to enter our calling, and see Christ as our pattern of good works, that we're to adorn the doctrine of God with these works

that have been planned from the beginning, God has chosen you from the beginning, and he has many good things that he wants you to do, and Titus talks about Christ as our pattern, and how we're to engage in those good works, it's sort of a Christian conduct manual, I love chapter 3 verse 5 and 6 where he says the Holy Spirit he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so being in Christ, we have the Holy Spirit poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, and the Holy Spirit enables us to engage in good works, and good deeds, things that adorn the doctrine of Christ, things that can be seen by the community, and our behavior as well, what we're to be, what we're to do, and we have the power of the Holy Spirit poured out upon us richly so that we can do it,

and it's all through Jesus Christ, and in Philemon, pretty much, we see Christ as the master, and all of our relationships, even our civil relationships are to be found in Christ, there's this runaway slave, and there's a master, but the master and the runaway slave are one in Christ, and the intercession that takes place there is based on relationship, and so all of our brotherly relationships, and our social strata, whatever caste we're in, then we need to know it has to do with our relationship of being one in Christ, all the members are one in Christ, in verse 6 of Philemon it says acknowledge every good thing which is in you, which is already in you, in Christ, or for Christ's sake, there's so much good in you in Christ, it needs to be acknowledged, and believe in God's ability in

and through Christ to change all of life, even civil relationships, even work relationships, it has to do with being in Christ, and so we don't view ourselves anymore in just the terms of the world and the positions of the world, but we look and we see we're one in Christ, we have a brotherly relationship, now acknowledge all the good things that are in Christ, and begin by faith to walk that way, and to live that way, and to act like Christ, because you have the ability, and it's in you, and then what a blessing to know from Hebrews that Christ is our intercessor at the throne of God, even now that the new covenant has been opened up, and it's such a blessing, he's talking about this faith that we have, because we've become partakers of Christ in Hebrews 3.14, and so we have his very

life, and when you read through the stories in Hebrews chapter 11, and you think about what these people did, how they subdued kingdoms through faith in Christ, and how they stopped the mouths of lions through faith in Christ, they quenched the violence of fire, some of them just hung on and persevered, and wouldn't accept deliverance because of their faith in Christ, and I can't help but think God was so pleased with their lives, because faith pleases him, they trusted God completely, and I wonder if I've at times even been able to get a little crack of a smile on God's face, because faith is what pleases him, and I just pray that God would cause us to know that we can have faith and trust, because we have an intercessor at the throne, and the Lord Jesus Christ is there for you now, he's

become your altar, and we have a right to eat of that relationship that those who serve the tabernacle don't have the right to do, in Hebrews 13, he says he's our altar, now Leviticus chapter 6 verse 30 tells us that they were never allowed to eat of the sin offerings, there were certain offerings they could eat of and partake in, but the sin offering was not one of them, they weren't allowed to eat the sin offering, not even the priest, they didn't eat the sin offering, but then when we read the gospel of John, Jesus says, hey I'm insistent that you eat my flesh and that you drink my blood, and so now Hebrews explains how our relationship is so new in every way, whereas they couldn't even eat of the sin offering, we are able to

partake and commune in the body and the blood of the Lord

Jesus Christ, what privileges we have in Christ, and how close we are in relationship to God through Christ, God increased our faith in what Christ can do in and through us, and then James, he really hits what we're to do in a practical way, because of our relationship in Christ, he says that we're in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, chapter 2 and verse 1, and he is a pattern, a glorious pattern of life, and he explains how we're to love our neighbor in special ways, and just a tremendous book, often compared to the Sermon on the Mount, and there's 108 verses, and there's a 54 imperatives in the book, tremendous authority, it reminds you of Jesus saying, you've heard it said, but I say unto you, well that's the kind of authority that you find in the book of James, with all the imperatives

that are there about how we should live, so read James for an imperative view of what we're supposed to do as Christians in Christ, and then Peter tells us about our good conversation in Christ, and our good behavior in Christ, and how the persecution, you might say, of Christ continues through his people, and the earthly pilgrimage that we're making here, and Christ is a precious cornerstone of our faith, he was rejected, and he suffered, but he didn't return reviling for that suffering, but he was able to be involved in what he called in 1 Peter chapter 5 and verse 12, he speaks of the true grace of God, and he's talking about that grace that we're to stand firm in, and he says that's why I wrote this epistle to briefly exhort and testify to you about what the true grace of God is, and

sometimes we think grace is just, it is that which we don't deserve, but when we receive the spirit of Christ living within us, then we have this living hope, this inheritance that's within us, it's a tremendous blessing, and we're to fix our hope, no doubt, completely on the grace that's to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ, and we conduct ourselves in fear while we're staying here on earth because of that, but our faith and our hope are in God, and in his return, in his word that's living and abiding and dwelling in us, and so we know that this finds favor with God, if for conscience sake toward God, a man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly, that finds favor with God, for what credit is it if when you sin and you're harshly treated, you endure it with

patience, but when you do what's right, and then you suffer for it, and at that point you patiently endure it, then this finds favor with God, because that's the grace of God, it's the grace that the prophets prophesied about in the coming of Jesus Christ, and so we're heirs together of this grace that we have, and it enables us to suffer the way that we ought to suffer, because he says you've been called for this purpose since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in his steps, and so we are to suffer for Christ, no doubt, well he speaks of women submitting to their husbands, he speaks of husbands, you know, living with their wives in an understanding way, it takes the grace of God to do all of these things, and we're to minister to one another as we

receive of the grace of God, we're to be good stewards of this manifold grace of God, because God's opposed to the proud, but he gives grace to the humble, and he says after you've suffered a while, then the God of all grace, who called you into his eternal glory in Christ, you see, after you've suffered, this God, who is the God of all grace, the one who allows you to suffer, is the God of all grace, and then he's going to call you into his eternal glory in Christ, he will himself perfect or mature you, he'll confirm you, you know, make you solid, and firm as granite, he'll strengthen you, and just fan the flame, you know, of Christ within your life, and he'll establish you, because God's glory is involved in keeping you, and so this is the true grace of God, that enables you to live,

and even to suffer well, tremendous, and then second Peter goes on, he talks about the true knowledge of God, and how Christ is our strength, and we have these resources of divine power, we have a divine nature within us, and he's able to rescue the godly from temptation, tremendous strength, and the best polemic against apostasy is always a godly life, so the true knowledge of God leads us towards a godly life, and we have the resources, and strength in Christ, we have the divine power to do it, because we have this divine nature living within us, so once we see the true knowledge of God, and know what we have in his divine power, and divine nature, and know we have the strength to live, we know that the resources are available in Christ, then we won't be making all these excuses, but

while we're not walking in the spirit, and while we're not living, because he knows how to deliver you from those temptations, and he doesn't put any temptation that's too great for you, so tremendous the things that we have in Christ, first John little epistle talking about Christ is our life, and fellowship that we have with Christ, and one another, and how Christ is an advocate for us, and how tremendous his love is, we're in him who is true, he concludes in first John 5 20, and in his son Jesus Christ, this is the true God, and eternal life, we're in Christ, we're in the true God, who is Christ, and the eternal life, I mean we live in the realm of eternal life, an abundant life in Christ, because as he makes so clear in second John, Christ is the truth, yes he warns against false

teachers, and he explains that it has to do with our relationship to Christ, so we're to abide in the teaching of Christ, to walk in the truth, and in third John he tells us that if we're walking in the truth, if we're walking in the way of Christ, the way of humility, and we're going to have our witness told by other people, he says they bear witness to your love, in verse 6, because they're walking in the truth, and if you're walking in the way of humility, and not in the way of pride, and they were out publishing the gospel without charge, and just giving out the good news, and walking a godly life, and Gaius who received them there, unlike Deocrates who had so much pride, because of him walking in truth, they went back to the church, and they bore witness to the love that Gaius had,

because he was walking in the truth, and if you're walking in the truth, you'll be walking in love, and people will bear witness of your love, and quite frankly, if Christ is in you, and he's living his life in and through you, and people are not bearing witness of your love, then you're not walking in truth, so it's a tremendous challenge to us to see that we walk in the truth.

Now the last one, Jude, Jude shows Christ is our keeper, that we are actually preserved in Christ Jesus.

He says that Jude is a bond servant of Christ Jesus, a brother of James to those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ, that they're actually preserved. I mean who you are is so important, because you've been called by God, and Jesus said that when he was praying in John 17, he said, Father, you gave him to me, keep him in thy truth, keep him in thy name, the name that you've given me, the name Yeshua, Joshua, or Jehovah of salvation. While I was there, I was keeping them, and not one of them was going to be lost, of course, except Judas Iscariot, so his scripture could be fulfilled, but Christ is seen in Judas, the one that can keep us in every way, and the contrast as you go through is these men are contrasted with but you, and so he'll talk about these men who are not following the Lord, these men who are going away from the Lord, and then he'll say, but you, and so we're the ones that are kept by the power of God, and we're the ones that remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and I love the way he concludes this little epistle about the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints, when he says, now to him who is able to keep you from falling, to keep you from stumbling, and make you stand in the presence of his glory, blameless, with

great joy, and among us, blameless is the word that means a fit sacrifice, and so through Christ, through his grace, through the sacrifice of Christ, then you can be presented and stand in the presence of the glory of God as a fit sacrifice with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time, and now, and forever, amen.

Well thank God for the epistles that teach us that it was of God, that we were put in Christ Jesus, that we were chosen in him before the foundation of the world, and we are in him that's true, even in his son, Jesus Christ, and we're created in Christ Jesus unto good works, things that he's prepared for our life, so let's recognize that we're crucified with Christ, and the life we're living now is not our life, but Christ's life, if we'll just recognize it and yield to him, that our old man was crucified with him, and if we're Christ, then we crucify the flesh with all the affections and the lust, and we're walking with him because we're risen with Christ, and we're seeking those things that are above, we've been raised up together, made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and our focus is there in a new relationship, a new law, a new kingdom, because if any man's in Christ, he is a new creature, and our life is hid with Christ in God, and when Christ, who is our life, appears, and who knows how soon that might be, then we shall appear with him in glory. Wow, what a hope we have being accepted in the beloved son, having no condemnation against us because of the fact that we're in Christ, who has been made to us wisdom and sanctification and righteousness, we're complete in every way in him, so abide in him, let his words abide in you, ask what you want, it's going to be done if you ask, so whatsoever you ask the father in my name, Jesus said he's going to give it to you, so thank God for setting us apart in Christ, and making us his workmanship, creating us in righteousness and true holiness, for if we believe that Jesus Christ died and rose again, even so them also with Jesus, those that sleep in Jesus, God's going to bring with him, and what we just look forward to all that we have in Christ, and we set our hopes completely, we fix our hope on the grace that's going to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ, he's coming and the dead in Christ are going to arise first, and then we which are alive and remain are going to be caught up to be with the Lord, and so shall we ever be with the Lord, God help us to understand.

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