

# Colossians 1

by John Nelson Darby

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*The sermon emphasizes the believer's identity in Christ and the call to live a life that reflects His glory through knowledge, patience, and dependence on God's love.*

**Scripture:** John 10:28, Romans 8:1, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 2:6, Philippians 3:20, Colossians 1:10-11, Colossians 1:27, Hebrews 10:14, 1 John 4:15

**Topics:** "Identity in Christ", "Walking Worthy of the Lord"

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## Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes in his sermon on 'Colossians 1' the significance of understanding our identity as risen with Christ, while navigating life in the world. He highlights that our walk should reflect our new life in Christ, filled with the knowledge of His will, and that we are called to express Christ in our daily lives. Darby points out the importance of patience and dependence on God's faithfulness as we face challenges, reminding us that Christ governs our hearts and motives. He encourages believers to recognize their fitness for heaven through Christ's work and to live in the light of God's love, which empowers us to walk worthy of the Lord. Ultimately, he calls for a deep consciousness of the efficacy of Christ's work in our lives.

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## Transcript

What characterises this epistle, is, that we are looked at as risen - dead and risen - but not yet seated in heavenly places, it is not the Holy Ghost revealing our place in heaven, but we walking as risen men in the world looking for it.

In different epistles we get various aspects of the Christian. In Ephesians we are seated in the heavenlies; in Romans alive in the world; here we are risen, but not in glory. We get here, more fully than elsewhere, life unfolded, your life is in Christ, in God. Then you should walk according to that. He puts us to run the race.

People get confused by connecting these "if's" with redemption. "Christ in you the hope of glory" - in you, Gentiles - is an entirely new thought, a thing never heard of before; it is that side of the mystery that is revealed here - not Christ come in glory to take up His people, but Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Verse 8 is the one place where "Spirit" is named in this Epistle.

Verse 10. He puts the walk first, not merely avoiding wickedness (a natural man might do that), but filled with the knowledge of His will. Christ left the traces of His path in the wilderness. In the ordering of Israel, the tabernacle was in the midst of the camp, and they were to march in the same order as they encamped; but when they wanted to find a way through the wilderness, the ark leaving the prescribed place, that was the centre, went before them, it was grace.

198 It is remarkable that there is no direction as to the walk, but filled with the knowledge of His will; are you that?

How often we do not know if we are right, even when we desire it.

Seeing the path through the wilderness tests the state. The vulture's eye hath not seen it. If we are to walk worthy of the Lord, we must be filled with the knowledge of His will. Men ought to read "Christ in you," as distinctly as the ten commandments on the tables of stone.

This is the apostle's comparison, not mine. We shall be perfectly like Christ in glory, and the eye is directed to that now. As though He said, I am going away, and I cannot be glorified in my own Person down here, but I should be in you. You are called to walk worthy of the Lord.

The first thing that struck me when I began to think seriously was, that Christ never did anything for Himself. He ought to govern our hearts, our motives, everything.

He was never weary of doing good - as a Man He sat weary at the well, yet ready to speak to a poor woman. He had come down so low as to be dependent on her for a drink of water. We should walk here, having Christ before the heart, governing us, as the only motive.

He was at all times, and in every case, governed by divine principles - sensible to everything around Him, but never governed by what was around Him; always by what was divine. We should always be governed by Him.

199 He was at all times the expression of divine perfectness.

"Christ is all, and in all," not "all in all;" that is never said of Christ, God is all in all.

Our calling is to walk worthy of the Lord: we are in this place, epistles of Christ. I am called to walk through this world to express Christ.

Three ways in which we are told to walk worthy - of "God," of "the Lord," of "the vocation."

Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us. We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

It is the spiritual state that discerns what is "worthy" of the Lord.

Verse 11. "Strengthened," etc. There is no doing without patience in the difficulties; you would expect it was to do something great - no, to be patient.

200 There is no will when I am patient. You will find when you fail through the day, it is patience has failed. We get wisdom to shew what the path is, strength to walk in it - not strength to overcome, but strength to endure. "Rejoice in the Lord always." If my will is at work, I am sure to get vexed with something.

We do not read, "Resist the devil, and you will overcome him," but resist, and he will flee from you; he knows he has met Christ, for flesh would not resist him.

Verse 12. Now he comes to what set him in the path. I am fit for heaven, made meet; I cannot look up to God without having the consciousness, I am fit to be there in light. An exercised heart looks at Christ.

The thief was fit to go to heaven; he confessed the Lord when the disciples were afraid to do it. He says, "Lord," and cared for nothing, though he was in agony, but "Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom" - and it is an ugly place to be remembered, as a thief on a gibbet.

The Lord will not remember him only - "this day shalt thou be with me in paradise." He was fit to go - to be the Lord's companion from the gibbet.

Do you believe that Christ by His work has made you fit? I do not ask if you have accepted it - God has; and you should be only too glad to have it.

201 He gave His Son in love, and accepted Him in righteousness; and the thing that gives me peace is what God thinks of it.

We are delivered from Satan's power. "Resist him, and he will flee from you." Christ has broken his power - I am delivered from the power of darkness - but that did not content God; He has translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love. We have got a positive place, the kingdom of the Son of His love, not of light, though it is that.

He has many attributes - He is holy, just, righteous; but there are two names given as what He is, "light" and "love," and we get the love as well as the light.

He is not content to say you have light, but you have love too.

Then He speaks of the fulness of the Person of Christ, but I cannot go into it all here.

Verse 16. I get blessed revelations brought close down to me. You must not suppose that we do not know Him because He is not present, for we know Him a great deal better, because we have the Spirit. I am not a stranger before God, for I know Him, and as my Father - if you get that, you get everything.

202 I have met God, I know what He is; and He is all love to me.

It is the full revelation of God to my soul.

In John 4 had Christ a hard word for the poor woman? Has He one for me? No; He would have given the living water - I have got it - He is all love to me; it makes me feel what a poor creature I am, these blessed revelations.

1 John 4:15. We have the consciousness that He is with us. If I make my abode with the Father and the Son up there, they will make their abode with me down here. One has a consciousness that He is with us - in us. He goes on revealing Himself to us. The time is coming when Christ will take to Him His great power, then I get glory.

His first coming did not bring the world into order: at His second everything will be brought into order, both in earth and heaven.

Look at the earth now - oppression, wars, &c. That was how Christ found the world; and He was a man of sorrows in it.

As to heaven, we read of angels that sinned and were cast out, and we never hear of them again. Do you think Christ, when He comes, will allow such things? Not for a moment.

The thing that should characterise us, is going against the stream. I know God is infinite love, He gave His Son for me, He will reconcile all things; but you hath He reconciled. It is never said God is reconciled to us. God's love was the spring of it all.

203 I joy in God, instead of hiding myself like Adam. You are brought now to enjoy His love. "Herein is love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment."

I cannot realise this wonderful love of God without loving Him.

It is the sense of its mother's love that makes the child obedient. I am reconciled, I am fit to be in the light. There is no "if" in what has gone before; perfect love accomplished all, "by one offering." The word "for ever" means uninterruptedly. The "if" never comes in as to redemption, the thief goes straight to heaven.

In the wilderness we are tested - you must set out for Canaan or you will not get there. We have the journey to take where the dangers are, and there we are thrown on the faithfulness of God, to keep us, and that is dependence.

The danger is real, but the care is faithful - it is constant dependence; but He has to keep me, every moment. "No man shall pluck them out of my hand;" but why does He say so, if there is no danger. Satan would like to do it. "Pluck them" (John 10:28) is the same word as "catcheth." (v. 12.) The wolf catcheth the sheep.

204 In 1 Corinthians 1:8, after having said, "who shall also confirm you to the end blameless," he begins to blame them for every single thing. They had more gift than grace, these poor Corinthians.

Christ is in heaven because my sins are gone; but when I come to my path, there is not an instant I am not dependent on His faithfulness; every instant of every day, I need to be in dependence on Him, and as to my sins if they are not perfectly put away now, it can never be done. "He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous." God had been considering Job, and it is He who directs Satan's attention to Job, but He forces Satan to own that Job was no hypocrite. He withdraweth not His eyes for one instant.

Do you believe, beloved friends, that God sees everything - a constant, unceasing care over us every moment?

It is not a question of my walk, but of the unchanging faithfulness of the living Lord. He never takes His eye off us, and if ours are always on Him, He will guide us with His eye.

"As he is, so are we in this world." I do not see any presumption in believing what God says, though it is most wonderful, blessed too.

Look at Israel, they were going on wretchedly - "a stiff-necked people" - but what do I hear from the mountain-tops? "I have not seen iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel."

205 No encouragement, beloved friends, to carelessness. But is it not encouragement to lean on the Beloved?

We are strengthened, but we need it, and have to walk in the sense of our need of it.

The Lord give us, beloved friends, the full blessed consciousness of the full efficacy of the work of Christ.

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