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GRATITUDE'S ATTITUDE: STEWARDSHIP BEYOND LIFE  
(Colossians 1:9-14)

INTRODUCTION

Life should be a celebration for God's people! Aging, by its very nature, is a time of reflection. A time of melting old hurts and molding new relations from them. Doing all God will permit us to do in making life better. Throughout life if we are not careful we will concentrate on changing the world and not take time to change ourselves.

A natural function of the Christian life should be the giving of thanks. An attitude that grows out of gratitude is always acceptable to God. Proper attitude will enable us to overcome the hindrances and hurts of life. Consequently, we can live with the trumpet note of victory sounding in our heart. Every person must judge his/her own life in relation to the goodness of God. My hope in this sermon is to focus all eyes on the manifold blessings of Christ to our life. What He has done for us defies measurement; defines perimeters and dignifies His grace.

Paul writes to the church at Colosse to challenge them to stop depreciating Christ. They should elevate Him to the place of priority He deserves. As a result, thanksgiving will be characteristic of the believer. The church at Colosse had allowed heresy as well as falsehood to creep into the church. The difference between heresy and falsehood is: heresy seeks to use the gospel to prove it is correct and falsehood makes no pretense of the gospel being correct. The folks at Colosse had allowed these elements to diminish Christ in His relation to them. Their emphasis had shifted from grace to law; from theology to philosophy and to the worship of angels. They gave Christ a place of prominence but not preeminence. They had distorted the doctrine and as a result misinterpreted the Christian life. They did not reject Christ, they dethroned Him! They did not ridicule Him, they diminished His claim on life.

We need Paul's message of thanksgiving. How wonderful God has been to us through Christ. Yet, between the press of time and peering into the future, we forget and neglect gratitude's attitude.

Somewhere in our journey we begin to concentrate on the frailty of life and the certainty of death. Suddenly the ultimate becomes our focus rather than the immediate. Legacy becomes more valuable not only in terms of accountants but character. Mike Huckabee, in his book, Living Beyond Your Lifetime, writes, “Some wag said that a man’s life consists of twenty years of his mother asking where is he going, forty years of his wife asking where he has been, and one hour (at his funeral) with everyone wondering where he ended up.” We inherited a legacy and we will leave a legacy. We must live with bifocal faith – able to see close up but also distant!

There are four actions that God has taken that brings thanksgiving.

I. Qualified us to be partakers with the inheritance of the saints. (1:12)

1. What a positive note to be sounded.

A. We are under siege by a mighty adversary

- Brazen defiant

(1) We belong to another country as well as this one

- a. In some measure we should live there now (Eph. 2:6; Col. 3:1-2)
- b. We are heirs with Christ (Gal. 4:9)

(2) On the way to the other country there will be trials and troubles.

- a. Sometimes to “toughen” us, other times to “tender” us.

II. He has delivered us from power (jurisdiction) of darkness (1:13a)

1. Not a future deliverance. He has already delivered us (Luke 22:52ff)

A. To the realm of His light

(1) Light should radiate from our deeds!

- a. This includes our stewardship. (When people tell me they will pray about tithing, it sounds strange. Why should we pray about doing what God has settled? Some say, “God said, I believe it, that settles it!” No! It should be, “God said it, that settles it, whether I believe it or not!”)
- b. God is the source of all we have. (It may not always make sense financially to give our tithe and offering. However, giving is not to reveal your financial bottom line, it is to show the quality of your character. To be light in a dark world.)

### III. Translates us into Kingdom of His dear Son (1:13b)

1. This is a present reality (Matthew 12:28)
2. This is a future certainty (1 Cor. 15:24)
  - A. Look to future with certainty and confidence.

My friend Dr. Keith Wigginton, while preaching at Glorieta said, “There is joy in the morning and we should want to finish with joy by:

- (1) Being faithful to our faith.
- (2) Being faithful to our fight.
- (3) Being faithful to our finish.

As believers move to the finish, stewardship of possessions becomes either obsession or obedience. I do believe there is a stewardship of possessions beyond death. This involves a trust in which we cannot control every aspect. We are dependent on the integrity of those left behind. It is our responsibility to create something good that will honor God once we die.

In accomplishing this if we allow all unpleasant past memories to eradicate present realities, we will dwell on the pain and miss the opportunity. We should always act with integrity. It is in vogue with our Father! Quoting Mike Huckabee again, “More important than the money we are paid for our work is what will become as a result of our work. Real faith takes care of what was and empowers us for what is. It also assures us of what will be.”

### IV. We have redemption and forgiveness (v.14)

1. Christ has paid the price. (Mark 10:45)
  - A. He gave His life in a rational, volitional and permanent way.
  - B. The incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection were expressions of God’s love.

Many years ago I shared a platform with an evangelist whose name has vanished but not his mark on my life. He said that the human body of Christ was wounded in every way you can wound the human body.

1. By **contusions** – being hit so blood gathers under the skin without breaking through – a bruise. Remember the rods?

2. By **laceration** – when a method is used that rips and tears the flesh. Remember the flogging?
3. By **penetration** – when an object goes into the flesh and stays there until someone removes it. Remember the crown of thorns?
4. By **perforation** – when an object is driven entirely through the flesh. Remember the nails?
5. By **incision** – when an object enters the body at an intentional spot. Remember the spear?

### CONCLUSION

One statistic is constant, 100 percent of all who live will die. Those of us who die in the Lord must take seriously stewardship after life. We should never be content to do only what is expected but go beyond to honor God. That is why making wills, leaving trusts and exercising God-honoring stewardship beyond life is vital. My giving beyond insures a continuous influence on witnessing to a lost world. Gratitude's attitude should always create a desire to serve God and others even when I'm no longer here.