

Series: *Colossians – Christ Above All*

Title: "Have You Been Translated?"

Speaker: Rev. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 9/20/2009

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In our study of Colossians chapter one, we've spent much of our time looking at the things that the Apostle Paul says that he prays will be true in the lives of the Colossian believers. Beginning in verse nine, he prays that they will be filled with the knowledge of God's will. And we saw that the knowledge of God's will comes only through knowledge of God's Word. Paul also prays that they will have spiritual wisdom, and spiritual understanding, in connection with their knowledge of God's will.

And in verse ten, Paul says that he prays that they will walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him in their lives. He prays that they will be fruitful in every good work; in other words, he prays that the fruit of the Spirit will be evident in their lives. He prays that they will be continually increasing in their knowledge of God.

And in verse eleven, Paul prays that they will be strengthened by God's demonstrated power, that they will not seek the counterfeit power of human wisdom and worldly philosophies.

And as we saw last time, in verse twelve he prays that they will be thankful to God the Father, because He has qualified them – He has made them fit – to be partakers of the glorious inheritance that is God's gracious gift to every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now this has brought us down through chapter one, verse twelve. And today we come to verse thirteen, and we find that this verse is a continuation of the same

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thought. Now, some translations like the New King James Bible have a period at the end of verse twelve, and they begin a new sentence in verse thirteen. But in the original Greek, there is no break. Verse thirteen is a continuation of the string of connected thoughts that Paul began all the way back at verse nine.

And so in verse thirteen, Paul says that we should be giving thanks to God the Father “who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated [or conveyed] us into the kingdom of His dear Son” – or as the New King James has it more accurately, “the Son of His love.”

Two Realms in Contrast

The Apostle Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit sets up a very sharp contrast in this verse. A great divide. It is the great contrast, the great divide, between two realms, or two authorities, or two spheres of influence and control.

And this is a contrast that we find throughout the Word of God. There are no gray areas in the Word of God. You are either in the light, or you are in darkness. You are either on God’s side, or you are on Satan’s side. You are either walking in the truth, or you are walking in error. You are either thinking and acting according to the false wisdom of this world, or you are thinking and acting according to the genuine wisdom of God. You are either bearing the fruit of the flesh, or you are bearing the fruit of the Spirit. You are either trusting in the flesh, or you are trusting in Christ. You are either a natural man, or a spiritual man. You are either a believer, or an unbeliever.

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There is no middle ground, no grey area. There are no paradoxes or contradictions with God. Everything is clear-cut and well-defined. We saw this in 2nd Corinthians chapter six last time. The Apostle Paul says there, beginning in verse fourteen:

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part [what portion, or what inheritance] has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Therefore "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord."

Christian, be separate from the world, and its ways, and its thinking. All you need is in Christ and in God's Word. You need fellowship with Him, and with His people.

The Power of Darkness

Here in Colossians chapter one, verse thirteen, Paul says that God the Father has delivered us from the power of darkness. Literally, He has rescued us. And this is an interesting word in the original Greek. This word "rescued" indicates something that God has done, once for all. He'll never have to do it again. On the cross, the Lord Jesus Himself said, "It is finished." The writer to the Hebrews tells us that Christ's sacrifice of Himself for our sins was "once for all." And it's also interesting that the form of this word "delivered" or "rescued" in the original language indicates

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something that God has done for His own interest or purposes. In other words, God has an eternal, glorious purpose in delivering His saints out of the power of darkness, and into the kingdom of His Son.

The word "power" here in the original language is also significant. It's a word that means rule or authority. It means control or dominion. It means jurisdiction; in other words, the right to have decision-making authority over something or someone. Paul is reminding the Colossian believers, and he is reminding us 2,000 years later, of where we have come from. As unbelievers we were under the rule, the authority of spiritual darkness. We were under the control, the dominion of sin. We were under the jurisdiction of the powers of darkness. Paul says this in Ephesians chapter two, beginning with verse one:

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages

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to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

The Kingdom of His Son

The Lord Jesus Christ has authority over the powers of darkness, and if you are a believer on the Lord Jesus Christ today, you are under His authority. You are in the realm of His power. We read in Matthew 7:29 that when Jesus was here on earth He taught as one having authority, as one exercising spiritual power, and not as a mere man – it's the same word we find here in Colossians 1:13. And with authority – the same word – Jesus commanded even the unclean spirits, and with authority Jesus answered Satan himself when He was tempted in the wilderness.

In John chapter 19, verse 10, as Jesus was about to be crucified, Pilate said to Jesus, "Do You not know that I have power" – authority – "to crucify You, and power" – authority – "to release You?" But Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me" – no authority – "unless it had been given to you from above."

And after His resurrection and before His ascension, Jesus said to his disciples, Matthew 28:18, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore" – because of that power, because of that authority – "and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them

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to observe all things that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age.”

And in Revelation chapter 20, verse 6 we read that the second death has no power – no authority – over believers because of the finished word of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus came, we read in Luke chapter one, verse 79, “to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

Jesus came to rescue man from his greatest problem – the sin problem. Our greatest need is not for a religious teacher, not a philosopher, not for a moral example. Our great problem is sin. We are all sinners. And sinners don’t need someone to help them get along the best that they can in their sins. We need a Savior *from* our sins. And that is what Jesus Christ has done for us. And Colossians chapter one, verse thirteen tells us two things that God the Father has done through Christ.

Delivered – Rescued

First, He has delivered us. This word “delivered” means “He has rescued us.” Once for all. God the Father did it once for all, through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. He never has to do it again, and we never need to add anything to what Christ has done. He did it all. God rescued us from danger, God has rescued us from eternal damnation, God has rescued us from the power of darkness, through Christ.

We could not rescue ourselves. We could not deliver ourselves from the guilt and the death penalty of sin. But Jesus could do it, because He was the perfect Lamb of

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God, and He did do it. He did deliver us. He turned away God's wrath that was poised against us. He rescued us both from present darkness, in this world. And He also rescued us from future darkness – He rescued us from eternal separation from God in Hell.

And we were delivered not only from danger; we were delivered from dark power and dark authority. We were delivered from the authority of Satan. We were delivered from the powers of darkness. Paul says in Ephesians 6:11-12 that the powers from which we have been delivered are not mere flesh-and-blood powers. They are "principalities...powers...the rulers of the darkness of this age...spiritual armies of wickedness." And God has provided us as believers in Christ with His spiritual armor, to stand against those powers.

Moved – Conveyed - Translated

So first of all, God the Father through Jesus Christ has delivered or rescued us from the power of darkness. But God did not stop there. He did not merely rescue us, and then leave us to fend for ourselves.

No, Paul says, secondly, that God the Father has translated, or conveyed, us. This word means to be transferred or moved from one place to another, to bring about a change of situation or place. And once again in the Greek language the type of verb that's used speaks of an action that God has done in the past, once-for-all, never to be repeated. God the Father did it once for all through His Son Jesus Christ.

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This word “translated” or “conveyed” was a word that was used to describe situations in ancient times when rulers would move whole populations from one country to another. And you may recall that very early in our study of Colossians we mentioned that the thousands of Jews who were in Colosse at the time Paul is writing this book, those Jews were the descendants of Jews who had been “translated” or “conveyed” – moved – out of Babylon and into the region of Phrygia, where Colosse was located, by the emperor Antiochus. And so Paul is talking about the same kind of thing, in the spiritual realm. We as believers in Christ have been moved from one country to another. We have been moved from one realm to another. We have been moved from one sphere of authority to another.

We also have another illustration of this in the Old Testament with the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt. God delivered the Israelites out of the house of bondage in Egypt. But He did not merely leave them defenseless in the wilderness. He went with them. He led and guided them every step of the way. And He took His people all the way to the Promised Land, the land that was their inheritance. God brings us out of one country in order to bring us into another. He has moved us out of the power of darkness, and He has moved us into His own kingdom of light. God in Christ has given us the victory over Satan’s kingdom of darkness.

It’s also important for us to note that the kingdom into which we have been translated or conveyed is “the kingdom of the Son of His love.” That’s how the New King James Bible translates it, and that is an accurate literal translation of the original Greek. When Jesus was baptized in Matthew chapter three, and again when Jesus was

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transfigured in Matthew chapter 17, God the Father declared on both occasions, "This is my beloved Son." This is the Son who is the object of My love. And we as believers on the Lord Jesus Christ are also the objects of God's love, because we are in Christ. His kingdom is a kingdom of love as well as a kingdom of power and of light.

Have You Been "Translated"?

Let me close our study of this verse in Colossians by pointing out two things by way of application. And they both center on this question: Have you been translated? Have you been conveyed out of the power of darkness, and into the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ?

First of all, if you are a Christian, listening to this program today, if you have truly been delivered from the power of darkness and into the kingdom of God's Son by believing on Jesus Christ and His finished work alone, then you need to be living in the light of that deliverance. You need to go to God's Word to constantly remind yourself of God's love for you through His Son. And you need to live your life in gratitude for that love. In Ephesians chapter five, beginning at verse one, we read this:

Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish

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talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.

And lastly today, let me say a word to anyone who is listening to this message who is not a believer on the Lord Jesus Christ. If you are unsaved today, you are still under the power of darkness. You need to come to the light. We read this in John chapter three, beginning at verse 18 – the words of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself:

He who believes in Him [that is, in Jesus Christ] is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds

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should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.

Don't refuse to come to the light. Receive Jesus Christ as your Savior from sin, right now, and God the Father will translate you, He will convey you, out of the power of darkness and into the kingdom of His own beloved Son, and you will become a beloved child of God.

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