***Be Present in Spirit

Colossians 1:3-8

COL-044***

Our subject is "Thanksgiving for the Colossians," segment number 22 in Colossians 1:3-8.

I remind you once more that Colossians 1:1-8 are a single long sentence in the Greek Bible. That single sentence is a very important sentence, as the apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is skillfully stringing together the reasons for which he is so thankful for the Colossian believers. And the things for which he is thankful for them are things which ought to be characteristic, obviously, of us.

**The Bible**

It is extremely important in Berean Memorial Church to have a Bible when you attend. You should not sit here as a clod, with folded hands and eyes glazed over, without an intellectual capacity operating behind it. You might as well stay home and watch TV; you'll have more inspiration out of that. If you come to this service, it is important that you dignify the Word of God. And you parents should see to it that your children dignify the Word of God by sitting there with a Bible. This is the word of truth. And the apostle Paul is commending these Colossian Christians for things that were the direct result of their reading of scripture – the Old Testament that they had at the time, which was explained by the apostles in its relationship to New Testament events, plus the doctrine which was being revealed of New Testament church truth.

If you don't have a Bible, all you're doing is listening to a preacher that might be wrong. He might be a con artist. He might be trying to lead you astray. He may be just trying to feather his own nest. And the only way you can be a true Berean is in the finest tradition of the Word of God as the church of Berea was. They received the Word of God willingly. They weren't staying home when it was time to be in Bible class in the service. And they were paying attention, but they were not trusting that preacher. They were trusting only the Word of God, because they read the Word of God. And if you do that, then you will realize that that is your calling – that there is your life. It is doctrine.

When I was in Paris Island boot camp in the Marine Corps, there was a plaque over the entranceway which was an admonition to all the drill instructors. It said something to the effect of: "Let no man's ghost ever arise and say to us that he died because we did not train him to meet the enemy effectively." And so too it is the true of us here at this church. May no Christian ever stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ and be able to say, "I stand here impoverished in my eternity. I am poorer than what I could have been. And now that I have a computer mind, I see all the things that could have come from that service, and that service. I'll remember them by the very day, and realize that I shoved off before the Word was preached, and wonder: "Whatever possessed me. And I'll have all the scars and the wounds that I've imposed upon my life and upon others, simply because I didn't have the sense to be trained for spiritual combat. And the only way you get trained for it is to be here.

This church, for over four decades, can say that they have obeyed that admonition to the drill instructors of this ministry. We have been faithful to our calling. We have taught people the Word of God. We have never done injury to anyone. We're not perfect. We don't always call the right plays, but the rest of the worms are just as imperfect. And Berean Church is not structured for those who do not like it. And when people drift off from us because they do not like it, that is because they are no longer satisfied with the orientation to doctrine. That's the only reason. And if we were to change the structure to please those who now do not like us, then those in the outer orbit who are generally neglected, and who do like us, would not be pleased any longer.

We fill a very distinctive niche, which is why we are capable of doing something that has a cutting edge that escapes the biggest of church organizations. What is it? We're smarter? No. More personable? No. More dedicated? No. It's because doctrine is our life. And we center that doctrine upon the Bible itself – what it says. It is not what the preacher says, or what he thinks, or anybody interprets.

Now, our principle of grace requires that we live and live. Therefore, when someone comes to you and has a different opinion on something that we might even teach here at Berean church, what is our attitude? Fine. If that's what you think the Word of God teaches, then hook your wagon to that star, and follow wherever it leads. You may crash with it, but follow your conscience. That's the principle of freedom – to follow your conscience.

However, we won't get upset, and we won't hyperventilate if you think that we don't exactly have the right slant on something. What we are interested in doing is honoring Christ. And we worship Him only one way. And that is through the knowledge of doctrine.

So, the apostle Paul here has a great deal of emotion behind this long sentence (verses 1-8). One thing hinged on another, and one link added to another, because what he is thanking God for is: "Here's a church whose life is centered in doctrine, and the people in it take it seriously. The kids don't sit there yawning. The kids don't sit there thinking, 'Well this is church. But boy, when I get out here in the world, where it's really at, where all the world is agog, I'm going to be part of the world.'" You should hate the world with an intensity. You should hate everything about the world. There's nothing nice about it. And the people of the world are the pigs. They're not the royalty. And they will treat you like a pig.

So, wake up to the fact that if you don't know the Word of God, you are a zero. No matter what position of power and of influence and whatever else you may have in life – without the Word of God, your eternity is going to be considerably less spectacular than it could have been.

So, the apostle Paul speaks to these people, first of all, as an apostle. He puts that right up at the start of this sentence. So, he wants to say to them: "I know what I'm talking about. I have the great authority of an apostle of God. And I, therefore, have a perception and an evaluation that is true." And furthermore, Paul says that he prays for them regularly as they engage in the angelic warfare. He says, "I never forget that every day you wake up, you're in combat with Satan and his demons, and they're just waiting to play you for a sucker. They're just waiting for an opening to come in on you, and to knock you for a loop.

Also, Paul says that he commends them for living in doctrine. He calls it "the faith" – the faith representing the body of truth which is associated with Jesus Christ, and for their consequent mental attitude love for all the believers. Yes, they have a goodwill attitude toward unbelievers, but their biggest love, and their biggest concern, and their biggest zeal, is for fellow believers – when those believers are up; and, when those believers are down. Those are the people that we should be able to count on. Paul identifies the motivation for their devotion to sound doctrine, and their widespread love for the saints, as the result of the fact that they know they're going to spend eternity in heaven with God. They have a certainty of eternal life in heaven. What a relief! What a peace! Many, many religious people don't have that. Many Christian people don't have that kind of a sense of peace and of destiny so that they can get on with their lives without worrying about what's going to happen when they close their eyes in death.

This destiny of heaven resulted from the gospel of truth which the Colossians heard, and they believed, to the saving of their souls. Today, we begin with Colossians 1:6: "Which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God and truth." The word "~which"" is not in the Greek Bible. It is put in here in the translation to indicate that the subject of verse 6 is the gospel mentioned in the context in Colossians 1:5: "You heard the word of truth the gospel, which; referring to that gospel.

**Be Present in Spirit**

Then he uses a word – the word "come to you." It's important that you understand the meaning of this word "come." It looks like this in the Greek Bible: it's the word "pareimi" (par'-i-mee), P A R E I M I. The word "pareimi" means to be present – to be present in contrast to being absent. It's A little different. It's grammatically different than just: "the gospel has arrived;" or, "the gospel has come." He's talking about a doctrinal condition under which these Colossians live. And that condition is that there is present in them the gospel. We can illustrate how this word is used in Acts 10:33 – the concept of being present in contrast to being absent. Acts 10:33: "And so I sent to you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. Now then we are all here 'present' (there's the word – 'pareimi') before God, to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord."

Here, Peter goes to Caesarea, and stands up before these people to speak to the house of Cornelius. And Cornelius says, "We're all present ("pareimi") here before God. That means that you were there. You know how the teacher calls the role in class. And people say, "Here." And there's always one snooty guy that says, "Present." Well if you want to really put on class, when the teacher calls the role, say "Pareimi." That'll really be class, because that is being here in the highest sense of the word. You are here. You are not out there, away from here. You are here. You are actually here. You're not like the people I heard about in the insane asylum, who were sitting around discussing why it was that they were all there in this crazy house. And they each gave their views, one after another, as to why they were there. And finally, one guy, nuttier than the rest said, "Friends, we're all here because we're not all there." Well we are all here. "Present" is what "pareimi" means.

What is here? The gospel. It is actually present. It's not just something that's coming. That's not the idea – that it came. It is abiding here. It is a doctrinal start. This is where all doctrine begins – the abiding doctrine of the gospel. And from there to the whole gamut of the full counsel of the Word of God.

Here's another example. I Corinthians 5:3: "For I, on my part, though absent in body, but 'pareimi' (present) in spirit." Paul says, "I'm not there physically, but I am there in my spirit: have already judged him who has so committed this as though I were 'pareimi.'" He says, "I've judged this sin that has taken place in your congregation, and the condemnation I have passed on it, though I'm not there, I have spoken as if I were there."

One more: 2 Corinthians 10:11 illustrates this concept of being present: "Let such a person consider this; that what we are in word by letters, when absent (not there), such persons we are also indeed when present." Now, this was a very hard group of Christians for Paul to deal with in the city of Corinth. Corinth was the good time city of the ancient world, and these Christians couldn't keep from viewing the Corinthians (the general population) as their friends. They never could get it through their stupid heads that the people of the world are enemies. And any person who is not well-versed in doctrine, and a positive receptor of doctrine, is your enemy. I don't care how personable he is. I don't care how sweet she may be. I don't care how clever, or how talented, or gifted, or wealthy, or anything else – they're dogs, and they are our enemies. And you don't treat those who are the enemies of Christ, and take them into your heart, as if they were okay. They're not okay.

Paul here was telling these people in Corinth who were guilty of all kinds of sins (as Christians) – and he's telling them, "I want you to have a throne in the kingdom. When the kingdom of Jesus Christ comes, I want you to have a throne and a realm of administration. That's going to be the greatest service to God that you'll have out there in the Millennial Kingdom. But you're not going to have a throne. You'll be saved, and you'll be there, but you're not going to have a throne if you keep living according to the style of the world.

Then he lists those terrible things in the 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians (lists of sins). And people always read those, and they think that: "Well, this is talking about unbelievers. No, these were Christians who are doing these things. And Paul is saying that you'll not have a place in the kingdom of God if you do that.

So, here the apostle is saying, "I have written to you in the first letter. And my agents have brought back your snotty remarks to me. They have brought back your sophisticated rebuttal, and you have given me the verbal back of your hand. And you have said, "He's great as long as he can write in letters. He's great when he can be at a distance. And Paul says, "Yes, I'm absent now, but I'm going to be 'pareimi' very shortly. And when I walk in there with my apostolic authority, you're going to find that I'm going to be as forceful in my actions upon you as I am with my words. Some of you, I'm going to grab by the scuff of your neck, and I'm going to throw you out the door, and say, 'When you're straightened up, come back.' But don't come walking around in this congregation like you are part of the team when you are an enemy of Christ.

So, this word here in Colossians has a lot more significance than might appear on the surface, when it says that this gospel has come. What this connotes, therefore, is that this gospel is present. The grammatical construction that we have in the Greek identifies that he's referring, in the context, to the gospel of the grace of God in verse 5. Therefore, we would translate it: "The gospel which is present." The idea is not merely that it is coming, but this gospel now resides as an active force within the mentality and the soul of these believers.

This happens to be in the present tense in the Greek language, which indicates that this gospel is always present in this form in the Christian. It is a constant condition under which the Christian lives. It is in the active voice, which indicates that this is the status of the gospel itself. It is actively functioning in the believer. And it is being present because they have believed it.

Then it says, in Colossians 1:6, "It has come 'to' you." This word "~to" is the Greek word "eis" (ice), E I S. Usually, this preposition means toward (direction). But, gradually, even here, in the New Testament times, it replaced the ordinary word for "in," which looks like this in the Greek: "en" – very much like our English word "in." But this word "eis" gradually took over, and "en" became used less. In fact, "en" doesn't even exist in modern Greek at all. This word "eis" took over the idea of "in." "Internal" or "within" is the idea here, not just going towards something.

So, this is "in you" – the Colossian believers. The gospel of the grace of God is present in the soul of the Colossian believers. That is what he is saying. The Bible doctrine of the gospel, like all doctrine, is, of course, recorded in the Bible. That's where we get our doctrine. We do not get it, as the Catholics claim, from the teaching authority of the church, which is expressed through the pope. Until the doctrine of grace salvation is transferred from the Bible to the mentality of the soul, and is believed, it is of no benefit to a lost person. The gospel is in the Bible. It'll do no one any good until someone who is an ambassador of Christ enunciates that gospel to the person who is lost, or else gives them a Berean evangelism brochure, which enunciates it in greater detail. So, until the doctrine of grace salvation is transferred from the Bible to the mentality of the soul, and believed, the person remains in a lost condition.

Now, the Colossians had been taught, probably by Epaphras, who was probably their pastor teacher, – they had been taught by him the doctrine of the gospel of the grace of God, and they had believed it. Consequently, the gospel was present in their souls, and it was transforming them from enmity with God to peace with Him. That was the wonderful thing that the gospel did. It brought them peace with God, as Paul is often fond of pointing out. The gospel present in the Colossians enabled them then to go into the full gamut of Bible doctrine, which is described as the whole purpose of God in Acts 20:27. The context (the background) of this passage is that Paul is leaving the city of Ephesus. He's been there for a-year-and-a-half teaching doctrine, and he has established a very strong, solid group of believers in the city, spread through all kinds of houses (churches) throughout the city, transforming the moral life of the city of Ephesus with all these pastor-teachers, one to each church, all over the city, guiding and teaching the congregation on the basis of the instruction which they have received from Paul. The time has come for him to move on in his travels and to go back to Jerusalem.

So, he has sent word to all the various pastors all over the city of Ephesus (all the elders), and he asked them to meet him down at the dock. So, that's where they are. They're here at the seashore down at the dock. He's about ready to board the ship. Paul has some final words of admonition to give them as those who are going to be left behind now to carry on the job of the local church, which is to teach doctrine. And that's the only job of the local church. And this is another thing. When you get smart enough about doctrine, you'll spot the fakery of local churches, who slip off into entertainment. And the people will think, "Isn't that wonderful? This church provides entertainment. That may be an auxiliary (an ancillary – a side issue) that may evolve, and you might have the facilities to do that, but you're a no-good fool if you think that that's where the Word of God lies – if you think that this is the progress to spiritual life: be there because it's so much fun.

The devil is wringing his hands. He's just waiting for a chance to sock it to you. There is no spiritual power in fun and games. And the apostle Paul is making it clear that these pastors are not to be dissuaded from their calling of being teachers of the Word. They're going to get all kinds of pressures on them. The bigger their congregations become, the more opinions there will be floating around, and the more things that these people will be wanting that are not legitimate for the local church ministry to do as a primary calling. Anything that we do that's fun in our Berean ministries always is an instrument (a vehicle) to the Word of God. That's all. We will do nothing that is fun that is not a vehicle to the Word of God. That legitimizes it. Otherwise, we are playing the world's stupid game. And if you want to support, and if you want to rally to churches that do that, then have a ball, because the Lord will wipe away your tears at the judgment seat of Christ, when you finally get your head screwed on straight because you can't help it.

So, Paul, speaking to these men, points out, among other things, their responsibility to take care of the people. He could say, in Acts 20:26, a very wonderful thing: "Therefore, I testified to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men." God help that to be true of our church. And I have no doubt that it is. Nobody who has ever come through this ministry has ever had any injury done to them of any significance beyond the wounding of their sin natures. And we are free of the guilt. That's what the blood means. We are free of any moral guilt that they may have encumbered upon them, that they have brought upon themselves because we didn't do our job of teaching them. Their ghosts will never rise up to accuse us of having failed to prepare them for the spiritual combat in the devil's world. Paul says, "I'm free of the blood of all men. I did my job as a DI (Drill Instructor)." Why? Verse 27: "For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God."

Somebody recently said to me, "I wish you wouldn't make such a stress on that particular subject (the way you're doing it), because I'm not going to be able to follow that, and why should I have to feel guilty?" Why should you have to feel guilty because I tell you what is the truth, and what is the proper conduct relevant to that truth, and you don't want to do it, so you want me to soft pedal the truth – not to say anything about it so that you don't have to feel guilty because you're breaking a point of wisdom? You can see the madness that carnality can bring to a Christian. And you wonder, "What's going on here? Where are people? Are they really so focused on this world? Are they so focused on themselves? Are they so out of touch with the brush of the angel's wings that they ought to be hearing" – those angels that are going to carry them into the Lord's presence. And if you don't hear the little wind flapping in your ears, then you really are out of touch with this world, because the angels are standing by to take you off. And why would you live in this world when your life is doctrine?

Paul said, "I gave you the whole purpose of the Word of God," which meant that he gave them the whole gamut of doctrine. All that had been revealed to him (in the Arabian Desert) of church age truth – he gave it all to them. In the year-and-a-half he spent with them in Ephesus, they had the finest instruction that any group of human beings on the face of the earth have ever had – then; or, since.

**Liberalism**

The gospel present in the Colossians gives them an abiding peace with God. That came to them as a free gift from God, as an act of their appropriation of Christ by trusting in Him. Now, with the gospel present in them, they have the foundation for being able to branch out to the whole depth of doctrine – that which the Bible refers to as the deep things of the Spirit of God. You cannot go anywhere with God, and you cannot go into anything deep with God until you have the gospel. That's the problem with the liberals. The liberal theologian does not preach a gospel, or he preaches a social gospel that has nothing to do with faith in Christ. Consequently, people cannot get anywhere with that kind of a gospel. All it does is create the wounds and the tragedies that liberalism always creates. And remember that while you may get hopping mad about liberalism in government; liberalism in educational institutions; and, liberalism in all the areas of society, it all began with liberalism religiously. It was when the churches became liberal that the rest of the institutions were bold enough to become liberal.

Ahab and Jezebel didn't take over the government of Israel and lead it into the grossest kind of immorality, and of idol worship, until the liberals of Israeli society of their day had undermined the authority of the Word of God. Once the authority of doctrine was undermined in Israel, then the people could be led anywhere, and they were led to their destruction, until Elijah stood up and knocked the fool out of the Baal worshipers. And God eventually, and always, does.

This gospel of grace, you understand, is under constant attack by Satan. And for that reason, it is rejected by most of mankind. The gospel of the grace of God is under constant counterattack by Satan, and it is rejected by mankind. That's why Jesus pointed out to us in Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter by the narrow gate (speaking about going to heaven), for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life. And few are those who find it."

Most people will reject the gospel of the grace of God. They'll take the wide road into the lake of fire. That is a brilliant picture that God produced for us through one of our people that we have on that Berean Evangelism Brochure. It tells the whole story. You just have to look at that picture, and you see the two ways and the two choices. But you have to open up the booklet and read it to find out how to get off the bad way, and get on the good way. But because the Colossians had entered into peace with God through an appropriation of free grace salvation, they were no longer engaged in the grueling effort to verify their salvation by their good conduct, as Lordship salvation makes people do – to verify, by how you behave, that you really are saved. You really are saved if you believe the gospel of the grace of God, and are trusting in Christ on the basis of what He paid for you on the cross in death to take you to heaven. Then you don't have to be gruelingly checking yourself out to see where you stand, because God is a God of peace.

When Paul came to the end of the book of Romans (please turn to chapter 15), he stressed this concept that the gospel in a person, present in the individual, creates an enormous peace with God. In Romans 15:33, Paul closes this great dissertation on how to go to heaven by saying, "Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen." He closes the main body of this letter to the Christians in Rome with a benediction which commends them to the God of peace. God is the God of peace, in that His free grace gives a lost sinner, who trusts in Jesus Christ for salvation, peace with God. He enters that inner circle where Christ has been made Savior. This is referred to in Romans 5:1, which says, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Here we have two concentric circles. The outer circle is the circle of eternal fellowship. Here's the cross of Jesus Christ. By believing the gospel, we enter into that eternal circle of eternal fellowship. And now we are justified. And you know that the word justified means that you have imputed to your credit the absolute righteousness of God. You are vindicated before all angels and all humanity. You are vindicated as one who is as good as Jesus Christ in the eyes of God. So to have justification, the absolute righteousness of God, you receive it by an act of faith. It's appropriation. It isn't a deal: "God, I'm going to live right. I'm going to do right. I'm going to be faithful to you." That's Lordship salvation. I'm going to trust Christ. Then we have peace with God. It's all through our Lord Jesus Christ. And the result is peace. But God is the God of peace also in the grace which He gives to the believer who is filled with the Spirit through confession to God the Father of his known evil. (1 John 1:9)



**Peace**

This is the peace of God which is in this inner circle. This is temporal fellowship. This is your daily walk. So, you have peace with God in terms of your salvation, but you also have peace with God on a day-by-day basis. This is referred to in a book of Philippians 4:7 (the inner circle), "And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Eternal fellowship is peace *with* God. Temporal fellowship is peace *of* God.

Now, you can have total peace with God as far as your salvation goes. You're going to heaven – no place else. But you don't necessarily have the peace of God unless you are here in obedience to Him. You're not grieving Him by practicing known moral sin. You're not quenching Him by telling Him "no" when He tells you to do something. That is when he places something on your heart (you mind), and you say, "No, I don't want do this. No, I don't want to do that. I can't. I don't see my way." He says, "I'll carry you through. Do it." But you say, "No." That's what the Bible means by quenching Him. And when you're not walking by means of the Spirit, that means that you don't know doctrine so that you have the Spirit of God that is taking that doctrine from your human spirit, and guiding it on your way so that you'll be nobody's fool.

So Paul says, "Because the gospel is in you, you have a two-way peace. You have eternal peace with God, and when you are subject to His Word, and when you do step out here (not out of salvation), but you get back here into the carnal area (out of the spiritual area), then you confess it (1 John 1:9). You come back in. Now your prayers are heard. Now nobody can deceive you. Now nobody can lead you astray, but it takes doctrine to do this. When you're in this inner circle of temporal fellowship, you will not be led astray. You will not be made a moral fool. But if you don't understand that doctrine is where it's all at, and you have to feed on it on the daily basis, then you are sitting duck, because then you will think that the world and the people in it are your friends.

What does James 4:4 say? "Friendship with the world is enmity with God." Now, is that true or not? Is that doctrine or not? Friendship with the people of this world, who are not the people of God, who do not function on the Word of God – they are the enemies of God. And if you want to be an enemy of God, just go ahead and be friends with the people of this world. Does that mean you don't deal with them? No. The apostle Paul takes that under consideration, in 1 Corinthians, when he says, "I don't tell you not to deal with them. We'd have to get out of this world to do that," he says. "But I tell you not to be part of them. You deal with them, but you recognize that you are dealing with an enemy of God. You are not dealing with someone who is a friend of Go. Therefore, he is not your friend either. And you do not take him to your bosom as your friend.

So, the apostle Paul has pointed out that peace with God is what these Colossian Christians have because the gospel abides in them. Peace from God, which Paul desires for the Roman Christians, is the product of free grace salvation. The outer circle is salvation. The inner circle is sanctification, setting apart to God in living. It's a perfect system. It works every time. It's the system that Christ used in His humanity. He learned doctrine, and then He stayed subject to the Holy Spirit. He never stepped out of the inner circle for one moment. Therefore, he was always led by the Spirit of God. His life was alive with significance. He was never caught up in the world system. What the world was hoopla about, He was not there. What the world was gaga about, He was not there. He was His own man. He stood tall in His real manhood. And those who know Him will have their real womanhood sustained, because they're in the inner circle of peace with God.

**Free Grace Salvation**

Receiving peace in one's soul from God begins with an act of saving faith on the part of the lost sinner. I want to remind you once more that there are two views on what constitutes saving faith. One is free grace salvation, which the Bible teaches, in verses like Acts 16:31. This is an act of appropriation. You appropriate it by taking the gift that God has offered to you of salvation. You do that by simply trusting in Jesus Christ alone to save you from hell, without the addition of any other human acts. The verse that summarizes this, perhaps most effectively, is John 6:47: "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life." Jesus said, "I'm the bread of life. If you accept Me on faith (that's like eating this bread), this will give you eternal life. John 6:47, "Truly, truly I say to you, he who believes has eternal life." Do you notice the word "believe?" That's it – nothing more.

**Lordship Salvation**

On the other hand, there is a salvation that is called lordship salvation. This is by an act of a commitment. This is trusting Jesus Christ as Savior along with the act of promising to obey Him as your Lord. That's things out of order. The intention to live one's life in subjection to the will of the Lord Jesus Christ – and submission to Him promised along with faith in Christ. Well, which ones of you here today do we have that's a paragon of virtue? Who, as a Christian, has always been submissive to the will of God? Which of you have always been on track? Which of you have not had to come back and say, "I was wrong," and admit, and confess? But when you did confess, then you came back here to the inner circle, and that's where He's Lord. Outside of the inner circle, but still inside the outer circle He is Savior. In the inner circle, He is Lord. He can be your Savior without being your Lord. That's the point you must understand. Do you see how deceptive this is, and what trauma this gives to Christians who come into the Christian life, and it takes them a while to get their lives straightened out? Or there is sometimes some Christian who is on track, and suddenly steps out of line. He thinks, "Oh, what has happened? I'm not going to heaven anymore." No, you're still saved, but He's not your Lord. Now you need to straighten that out, and put him back in charge.

**Repentance**

So, the commitment under Lordship salvation is viewed as a repentance of one's sinful lifestyle before you trust in Christ for salvation. When the Bible speaks about repentance, it means it wants you to believe. It says turn from your idols to the living God. That's the principle of Scripture. You turn from that which is false to that which is true. That's how you change your mind. You change your mind about going along with the idols. And you change your mind, and you go to God. What do you do? You believe in Christ.

So, repentance is not something separate from believing. It's not: "Me Him your Lord and Savior." It's “Make Him your Savior alone.” Then you proceed to grow into spiritual maturity to make Him your Lord. 2 Peter 3:18 makes that point for us: "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity."

**Believe**

It's all centered upon that word "believe." It looks like this in a Greek Bible. It's the Greek word "pisteuo" (pist-yoo'-o), P I S T E U O. "Pisteuo" means to trust. And this word never implies the addition of any other factor. People who pursue Lordship salvation do that because they're so frustrated because of the way Christians live. They're so frustrated (and we can all sympathize with that) with the way Christians behave themselves – in such ungodly ways. What Christians pursue, and what they do with their lives, you would think that they're nothing but pagans, and that they knew nothing of the realities of Christ. And so they say, "What is that? Why is that?" And they come up with the idea that it's because they didn't repent of their sin to begin with. It's because they didn't promise to make Him their Lord. They just made Him their Savior. So, salvation gets tied up with how you act. But the word "believe" just means "to trust."

So, the Lordship salvation people say, "You guys are just interested in cheap grace." Or they accuse us of easy "believism." Free grace salvation, which God in scripture offers to the lost, is free, but it is not cheap because Christ paid for it with His life. It's free, but it's not cheap. And it's an insult to use that term. The truth is that our God asks for nothing more than that a lost sinner believe Him when He offers to save him from the lake of fire. He will save the one who does no more than trust in Christ as Savior.

1 John 5:10 says, "The one who believes in the Son of God has a witness in himself. The one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because He has not believed in the witness that God has born concerning His Son." Do you want to count how many times it talks about believing there? It's all a matter of believing God or not believing God. It is not a commitment to behave yourself.

Should you behave yourself? Yes. And I am amazed at what people say. I had somebody recently tell me: "You teach people that they can live any way they want to after they're saved." I'm dumbfounded. And yet, I understand that they're struggling to want to make people do right. And they don't understand that people are going to do right when they have the gospel in them bearing the fruit of all the counsel; all the will; and, all the purpose of God, which now evolves from the fact that they have the foundation of the gospel. Once you have the gospel, then you grow into spiritual maturity. If you don't have the gospel, then you don't grow into anything. And when you grow into spiritual maturity, then your life cleans up. Then you start doing right. And as long as you keep feeding the soul; you keep in the Word of God; and, you keep strengthening that spiritual life, you're going to walk tall. You're going to be the magnificent, beautiful person that the people of the world think they are when all they are, are dogs and pigs. They're not the beautiful people of the world.

Lordship salvation describes free grace salvation as an intellectual ascent to the gospel. They say, "Oh, you have a head belief – not a heart belief. Well the Bible says that: "With the heart, man believes unto righteousness." That sounds to me like the head is involved in being saved. The only way you are saved is that you believe (a mental acceptance of) something that's true. Saving faith is an intellectual act.

What is false, non-saving faith? It is one which is placed in the wrong object: "My faith is in my good works. My faith is my Roman Catholic Church's authority to give me salvation. My faith is in my priest to give me absolution from sin." That's non-saving faith. It's in the wrong object. Or it's a mere calculated pretense: "I'm pretending to be religious. I go through the motions. I walk into this church; I look around here; and. I see how these people act, and that's how I act. I don't trust Christ as savior. But gee, I like this girl, and I want to win her heart. So, I'm going to act like all these people act, and she will think that I'm saved." That's a pretense. That's not saving faith. It's a gain – a goal.

You may not have grasped the growth in the spiritual maturity. 2 Peter 3:18: "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity." The depth of that little verse, and the significance of what it says, is so enormous, so that you can be everything that is the purpose of God for you. That will require another session which we'll do next time.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your Word.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

[**Back to the Colossians index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/colossians.htm)

[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)