



4/1/26

This day of the week before Jesus was crucified is called Spy Wednesday by some. This is thought to be the day that Judas conspired to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. What a sad day. And yet, God absolutely used it for our good. Way more than just good. It's the precursor to our salvation. It astounds me that Jesus knew the whole time of his 3 years with Judas that he would betray Him.

My daughter shared a song with me called Judas by Josiah Queen. The words to the chorus are...

*Yes, maybe I'm like Judas.
Maybe I'm that thief.
Maybe I'm that sinner
That put You on that tree.
Thirty pieces of silver,
He ain't worse than me.
Because he betrayed You for money,
And I did it all for free.*

*Whoa!!!
Jonna*

Colossians 1:9-23

As with several of his letters, Paul was in prison when he wrote Colossians. When I see how he encourages the believers with such joy WHILE in prison, I am amazed... and I'm reminded what God can do in my heart when I constantly remember the gospel. That's the only difference between a believer who is living a victorious life and a believer who is living a dissatisfied life. It's not the circumstances that make the difference. It's the focus. Paul was always remembering what Jesus did for him and that gave him joy. I'm guessing he viewed his imprisonment as an opportunity... to preach the gospel to the prisoners and the guards, and to have plenty of time to write letters of encouragement and instruction to the churches. O Lord, please help me to see every circumstance as an opportunity to love and serve You more because

of all You've done for me.

Vs. 9 starts out, "And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you..." Heard what? From the day Paul heard about their faith in Jesus. He didn't plant this church. He had never even been there. But he was so excited about their faith, he had to write. He prayed for them. Prayer is never "the least" I can do for someone. It's "the greatest" I can do. Truly, they don't need ME. They need Jesus.

What did he ceaselessly pray for these believers? He prayed they would be "filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding." He wanted them to know God and His will so thoroughly that they would be FILLED with His wisdom and understanding. His wisdom, according to James 3:17 is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere." That is very different from the wisdom of this world. I won't understand that if I don't know God and His will. Nothing good comes from the wisdom of the world. James says it is "earthly, unspiritual, demonic" with only "disorder and every vile practice" coming from it. The only way to overcome the wisdom of the world is to know God more and to understand Him better.

Proverbs speaks of how a person of understanding grows in God's wisdom, helps reveal the heart, is slow to anger, doesn't lean on his own wisdom but God's, is able to cool his spirit and not say words he regrets, speaks the words of God. I grow in understanding and become less and less of a fool the more I know the Lord. This is a wonderful prayer.

For what purpose does Paul pray for "all who have not seen him face to face" to know God like this?

- By knowing God I will walk in a manner worthy of Him more and more. This is not about knowing ABOUT God. This is about KNOWING God. Just being in His presence makes me more and more like Him because the Holy Spirit transforms me as I turn to Him and keep my eyes fixed on Him (2 Corinthians 3:16-18).*
- By knowing God, I will please Him. By knowing God, I will WANT to please Him. The most wonderful thing is, I CAN please Him. He does not demand my perfection in order to please Him. Jesus bought my perfection with His blood. He just wants me to know Him and HE changes me so that I CAN please Him... and find satisfaction in Him.*

Well... what IS worthy of God? What pleases Him?

- That I bear fruit in every good work. I don't MAKE the fruit. I bear it as a branch bears the fruit of the vine that nourishes and sustains it. John 15:5 says that "apart from Him I can do nothing." But praise His name. I am not apart from Him!*
- I will grow to know Him more and more! One of the terrible tragic results that came when Adam and Eve rebelled against God was that their image of who God is became*

distorted. Before the fall, they walked with Him in the Garden and experienced His love and joy and holiness. With the fall they brought a lie into the world... that God withholds good from us and lies to us. The transformation process as I seek to know and understand God restores my understanding of who He is and the beautiful relationship He wants to have with me.

- *By being with Him and knowing Him, He strengthens me according to the abundance and glory of His power so that I can grow in endurance and patience while still having greater and greater joy. Being with God makes me so joyful, steadfast, and patient that no circumstance can steal my joy... not even imprisonment! The only way I'm going to believe that is if I keep seeking to know God and never give up.*
- *It pleases God that I thank Him for all He's done.*

Well... what has God done? The Father in heaven has QUALIFIED me "to share in the inheritance of the saints in light." He has taken me, a sinner, and made me a saint. I could not do this on my own. No matter how good I try to be, I can no more earn my way to God than I could swim across the 64 million miles of the Pacific Ocean without dying. The Father qualified me and the Son swam the distance for me. I was stuck in the domain of darkness with no hope of rescue or escape. But the Father delivered me FROM that domain. He didn't just put me in a neutral land. That doesn't exist. He took me from the darkness and transferred me to the kingdom of His beloved Son, Jesus where I am now called a saint in light... His child... His friend... His servant... as a child serves in the family business.

How did the Father qualify me and transfer me to a new citizenship in the Kingdom of light? He redeemed me... Jesus bought me with His blood. He forgave my sin because I could not pay my debt. In Colossians 2:13-14, Paul says, "And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, GOD MADE ALIVE together with HIM, having FORGIVEN us ALL our trespasses, by CANCELING the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, NAILING it to the CROSS." I was DEAD in the darkness. I had no hope. The Father gave me hope and life through the death and resurrection of His Son. O Lord, please help me to grasp how enormous that is. Let me never take my rescue for granted.

Who is Jesus? Some people say He was a good man. Some say He was a good teacher. Some say a prophet. But the truth is, He couldn't be any of these unless everything He said was true. Once I embrace the truth, the only answer for me is to make knowing and serving Him the mission of my life until He takes me home.

This is who He is...

- *He is the image of the invisible God. He came to make the Father known to me because the Father loves me and He wants to give me eternal life, to set me free from the darkness. Everything Jesus modeled of His goodness and holiness and righteousness and gentleness and humility and sacrificial love IS who the Father is.*

- *Jesus is the firstborn of all creation. In other words, it is only because Jesus rose from the dead that I can have eternal life. His death conquered death. His life gave me life.*
- *He created ALL things in heaven and on earth. He created everything I see and everything I don't. He created all of those in authority... seen and unseen. It is all through Him and FOR His glory... even those who think they're their own power. EVERY knee will bow to Him as Lord.*
- *He is before all things... including time.*
- *All things are held together in Him. In fact, Hebrews 1:3 says He holds the universe together by the word of His power.*
- *He is the head of the church, which is made up of the body of believers who are in Him because of Him.*
- *He is the beginning. Through His resurrection the church was born... so that He could be preeminent over everything. He has earned first place through His death and resurrection. He is the ONLY one who was good enough to earn anything. And He did it for me.*
- *All the fullness of God is pleased to dwell in Him.*
- *Through Him I am reconciled.*
- *Through Him I have peace with Him.*
- *Even though I was alienated from Him, hostile to Him, and doing things of which I am now ashamed, Jesus reconciled me to Himself and to the Father by dying for me. Because my flesh couldn't cover my debt, He sacrificed His perfect flesh. He is presenting me to the Father holy, blameless, and above reproach. I am none of those things apart from Jesus. I was sent the following quote by John Piper. I so need to be reminded of this! "Our acceptance rests upon what Christ has done for us, not what we do for Christ. A changed life sprouts as a result of our justification, not as a condition of our justification." This is what Jesus did for me. He presented me to the Father fully justified, and now He's doing in me what He declared over me.*

In light of the fact that God the Father has transferred me to His Son's kingdom, and in light of all who Jesus is, how does God want me to respond? "Continue in the faith, stable and steadfast. Don't shift from the hope of the gospel that I heard and that continues to be proclaimed."

Continue in the faith, stable and steadfast. There will be many things that try to shake my faith. Don't let them. God is still on the throne.

Don't shift from the hope of the gospel. Circumstances will always tempt distraction. The hope of the gospel is constant. As long as my hope is in the gospel, my hope will be secure.

As I think about our weather lately and how it shifts from 80 degrees to the 40's or lower, I think... that's how my feelings are. Some days my feelings are all over the place like the windy days. Sometimes I'm way up and other days my feelings can take me way down. If I put my

hope in my feelings, I'll go crazy. But if my hope is in the constant peace and joy of the gospel... every day will be an opportunity to take a step closer to the Lord. He doesn't change.

Just as the gospel has been proclaimed throughout the whole creation, let me continue to proclaim it to my heart. That's the bottom line. Everything flows from knowing the Lord and His gospel. I don't have to make all the things happen. I just need to be in His presence, seeking to know Him better. He will do the rest. O Lord, please make it so in me.