

1. Paul's reason for writing to the Colossians
    - a. Encourage their hearts
    - b. Increase their knowledge and understanding of God and His will
    - c. Prepare them to withstand and counter ungodly arguments
  2. Paul's flow of thought
    - a. One thought gives rise to another related thought, typically at a deeper more foundational level.
      - i. Thankfulness
      - ii. Redemptive hope
      - iii. Concerted prayer
      - iv. Contemplation of the majesty of God's person, purpose, and plan
        1. The triune nature of God
        2. Differing roles and authority, but a single essence
        3. Submission within the Godhead
          - a. Based upon
            - i. Security and assurance in the Father's love
            - ii. Security and assurance in the Father's goodness
            - iii. Security and assurance in the Father's plan
3. This week we return to our text to look into Col 1:12-14 in greater detail
  - a. *"giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."*
    - i. "qualified us"; your translation may say "made fit"; better translation.  $\text{ἰκανώσαντι}$ ; to make sufficient, render fit
      1. "qualified" can have the idea of something earned by merit or accomplishment
        - a. Qualifying trials in racing or sporting competition
        - b. Qualifying test scores that determine your placement or certification
        - c. Qualifying experience to serve as an expert witness
      2. That is NOT what this word is about
        - a. "giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us"
          - i. God is not the "certifier" of our fitness or sufficiency
            1. "check box"; scores are high enough/times are fast enough

- ii. He is the agency... the author... of our fitness
  - 1. It is He who makes us fit
  - 2. *2 Co 3:5 "Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, 6 who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant"*

ii. How are we made fit?

1. Through the sacrificial death of Jesus

- a. Last week Ps 40; depicts Jesus as Messiah fulfilling the requirements of paying the price for sin. The sacrificial system was insufficient to the task. The blood of Christ was and is.
  - i. *Rom 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*
  - ii. *Gal 2:16 ff. "nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified."*
- b. *Eph 1:7 "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace"*
- c. *1 Pet 1:18,19 "knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ."*

2. Through the re-creation in the moment (two moments)

- a. *2 Cor 5:17 "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."*
- b. *1 Cor 15:50ff. "Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will*

*sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”*

3. Through ongoing transformation in the process

a. 2 Cor 3:18 *“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”*

b. Rom 12:2 *“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

iii. Why are we made fit? Because of our great potential? Our inherent value?

1. Because of God’s grace, not our merit

a. Rom 5:6ff. *“For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.”*

b. Rom 3:9ff. *“for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; 10 as it is written, “THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; 11 THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; 12 ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.”...(ending with) 18 “THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES.”*

2. Because of God’s plan

a. From Rom 5 above, *“For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly”*

i. Speaks to purpose, planning, and timeframes; not happenstance or coincidence

b. Eph 1:4 *“He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love*

## *5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself*

- i. Before He hung the stars in the sky... before He separated the land from the seas... before He formed man from the dust of the ground...seeing the countless instances of our future betrayal, rejection, and failure... He envisioned and planned for the death of His son to reconcile us to Himself as sons and daughters
- c. Even in man's creation we see the planning of redemption
  - i. Gen 1:26, 2: 7 *"Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;... Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."*
    - 1. "in His image"
      - a. Only man, of all creation, is given this designation
      - b. No biblical definition; but must relate to qualities that God possesses. Likely includes:
        - i. Self awareness
        - ii. Intellect
        - iii. Creativity
        - iv. Grace and mercy
        - v. Eternal
        - vi. Moral sense/conscience
  - 3. Did man have a moral sense before the fall?
    - a. Unequivocally, yes.
      - i. An understanding of goodness
        - 1. The goodness of fellowship with God
        - 2. The goodness of fellowship with each other
        - 3. The goodness of creation and the garden
        - 4. The goodness of obedience to God
    - b. So, what, then, is the "knowledge of good and evil"?
      - i. Essentially, the awareness of evil and the "goodness that is a counterpoint to it.

1. Loss of innocence
  2. Indwelling of sin
- c. We see a concrete example of what the consequences of the Fall... the “knowledge of good and evil”... as we compare Gen 2:25 with Gen 3:7. This example is deliberately included
- i. 2:25 *“And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.”*
  - ii. 3:6,7 *“When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.”*
- iv. With the eating of the fruit, they became aware of the sin of lust instead of the purity of desire; the inappropriateness of public nakedness. And in the same moment, they became aware of the “goodness” of modesty.
1. With no awareness of sin, there was no awareness of the need for a “counter” or preventative for that sin.
- v. As touched upon earlier, another aspect of the image of God is likely found in Gen 2:7 “Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”
1. Again, out of all creation, this is unique to man
    - a. Intensely personal act.
      - i. “Formed” is *yāṣar*, term used to describe a potter shaping his clay
      - ii. Think of the care and skill that goes into the act
        1. Mixing the clay to a proper consistency
        2. Preparing and truing the wheel
        3. Centering the clay on the wheel
        4. Determining and varying the speed of rotation as the clay is shaped
        5. The delicate forming of the clay as it takes shape between the potter’s skilled hands

6. The selection and application of glazes to bring color and vibrancy to the finished piece
  7. The firing of the kiln and careful regulation of its temperature.
- iii. And then, when the vessel is seen to be sound... fit for use and beautifully shaped and colored... God, our Father brings His face down to ours and breathes His life... His essence... into His beautifully created work.
    1. Eph 2:10 *“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”*
2. But what does this have to do with our “being made fit”? How does being created in the image of God affect our redemption?
    - a. Could we have been redeemed as we know and experience it...
      - i. Without the capacity to understand grace?
      - ii. Without the capacity to understand goodness?
      - iii. Without the capacity to understand our sinful state?
4. So what have we learned or brought to remembrance this morning?
    - a. We are made fit by God Himself, not through our own efforts or merit
    - b. We are made fit as an act of great and gracious love for us
    - c. We are made fit as a result of an eternal plan, rooted in the mind of God before the foundation of the world and to bring Him glory
    - d. We are made fit through the sacrificial act of the Son, Jesus, as he gave His life a ransom for many.
    - e. We are made fit through the creative work of the triune God, in making us bearers of His image and capable of understanding His grace and redemption
    - f. And it is my hope that we have enlarged our comprehension of how great is God’s love for us, His adopted children.
      - i. Listen to Paul’s words in Eph 3:16ff. *“that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.”*

Let us pray