



Ruling Elder, Jed Faroe
Colossians 2:11-15

September 16, 2013
English Standard Version

"A Supreme Triumph"

The 7th Sermon in a series on the Book of Colossians entitled
"The Supremacy of Christ"

Colossians 2:11-15

"¹¹ In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, ¹² having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. ¹³ 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, ¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him."

"In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ..." I don't know how Dave Silvernail does it. How does he time it so he's out of town when it comes time to preach on a passage like this! "Circumcision" three times in the first verse! Circumcision, an awkward and sometimes controversial subject and a little tricky for G-rated explanations. As I thought about babies and circumcision I could just see the baby from the Superbowl E-Trade commercials, you know, the one who is talking to his suspicious girlfriend who worries that he's been with "the other woman," that "milk-aholic Lindsay". Just as our smooth-talking E-Trading baby has girlfriend convinced that he is alone and busy making a killing on E-Trade, "Lindsay" pops into the picture

next to him with her classic line, “MILK-A-WHAT!!!???” I can imagine reading this verse from Colossians to that E-Trade baby and in my mind can hear *his* response: “CIR-CUM-WHAAATTT!!!!!!???”

Please bow and join me in prayer. Lord, may your Spirit circumcise our hearts as we look to a difficult but triumphant passage in your inspired Word. By the power of your Word may we be built up and may Christ be glorified. Amen.

So, what is this *circumcision* thing all about anyway? It *has* been in the news recently, just three weeks ago the American Academy of Pediatrics issued a statement stating that current evidence indicates that the health benefits of newborn male circumcision outweigh the risks and that the procedure’s [health] benefits justify access to this procedure for families who choose it. But what does the Bible say about this procedure which has been around for millennia, often seems to swirl in controversy, and clearly figures so prominently in the Scriptures?

Fundamentally, circumcision was an initiating rite of the old covenant symbolizing cutting away of sin, undergoing a change of heart, and inclusion in the covenant household of faith. We first see circumcision in Genesis 17 at the time when God promises Abraham that he will be the father of many nations:

*And God said to Abraham, “As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised... and it shall be a **sign** of the covenant between me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations... So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised... shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”*

So according to Genesis circumcision is a *sign* of the covenant between God and Abraham, the father of God’s people in the Old Testament and the spiritual father of Christians today. It was a physical reminder of the promises God made to his Chosen People. Furthermore, it was commanded to be performed on every eight-day old male child descended from Abraham throughout the generations. Therefore this sign represents in the flesh God’s *everlasting* covenant with His people. On the other hand, we see in the Genesis passage that any *un*-circumcised male shall, in an ironic play on words, be *cut off* from his people. This is a key element of circumcision – if you were circumcised you were “in” if you were not you were “out” – cut off from God’s people. So, circumcision was very much an identity thing to the Jews. It was a sign of inclusion in the nation of Israel.

But as we read the Old Testament we see that circumcision was much more than merely a mark of identity. God’s intent was always that it would reflect a changed state of the heart. In Deuteronomy 10 God sets *his* heart on his chosen people. Moses tells

Israel to *“circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn.”*

Circumcision was intended to be a matter of the heart. In Deuteronomy 30 Moses predicts future failures, rebellion, and captivity for God’s people, but also brings them a message of hope. Not hope in themselves. Not hope in their own ability to circumcise their hearts. But hope in their gracious Lord: *“And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you might live.”* Thankfully, circumcision of the heart is something **God** brings about.

Ezekiel recognizes that circumcision is both a matter of identity and of the heart, commanding that foreigners “uncircumcised” in *heart and flesh* be excluded from the temple. And Jeremiah *warns* God’s chosen people in Jeremiah 4, *“Circumcise yourselves to the Lord; remove the foreskin of your **hearts**... lest my **wrath go forth like fire**...”* God takes circumcision of the heart seriously! Lest there be any doubt about the real nature of circumcision, Paul puts it to rest in Romans 2:29 when he says, *“But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a **matter of the heart**, by the Spirit, not by the letter.”* Circumcision has always been about a heart relationship with God.

So when we said that circumcision was an initiating rite of the old covenant symbolizing cutting away of sin, undergoing a change of heart, and inclusion in the covenant household of faith, the real weight is on the inward nature of circumcision – the spiritual significance, the heart of flesh that God alone gives us by his grace through faith.

Well, I guess that wasn’t so bad after all. Circumcision, in the Bible’s view was merely a sign of inclusion in God’s covenant family and hopefully a reflection of a real heart change on the part of the recipient. Glad we got through that! So let’s reread verse 11 and go on to the next verse: *“In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.”*

Wait a minute! That wily ole’ Pastor Silvernail has slipped me yet another landmine in verse 12! Verse 12, following on the heels of the “circumcision verse,” is one of the classic reasons most reformed believers hold to infant baptism. Oh no! Not again!! Another controversy- infant baptism! Why would we baptize a baby?! What is this *infant baptism* thing all about??

Well, let’s start out with some *baptism* basics. Why **do** we baptize? We baptize because Jesus **told** us to. In Matthew 28 he says: *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”* **What** is baptism? Baptism is, in its **form**, a ceremonial washing that *signifies* inward cleansing and remission of sins.¹ In effect it is a sign symbolizing washing away the sins that **stain** us. As Ananias told Paul, *“Rise and be baptized and wash away your*

sins, calling on his name.” This metaphor of washing is common in Scripture. Ephesians 5 says:

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

Christ washes away our sins.

We are a sin-stained people - dyed in the wool sinners. But Christ's washing is both powerful and wonderful. No sin can withstand it. In 1 Corinthians 6 Paul lists some deadly sins: “...do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.” But then, addressing the Corinthian believers he loves, Paul continues with the almost shocking statement, “And such were some of you... But [and with God there is always a but] you were **washed**, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. The washing of baptism **signifies** this amazing Gospel cleansing.

Baptism is also a **sign** of entry into the family of God. We see this association of baptism and God's people in First Corinthians 12:13 where Paul proclaims “For in one Spirit we were all baptized **into** one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.” Then, in Romans 6:3-4 we also see that baptism signifies union with *Christ* in his death, burial, and resurrection. “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized **into** Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”

So, OK, if baptism is a sign of our union with Christ, why do we Presbyterians baptize infants who are too young to *profess* faith in Christ? Without being dogmatic I'd like the lay out why we baptize infants in the PCA. As one who was baptized as an infant by Presbyterian parents, and then baptized again as an adult after coming to faith and joining a Baptist church, I've seen both sides of the infant baptism issue up close and personal. I'm *now* convinced from the Scriptures that infant baptism *is* called for. So from a noteworthy, but now Scripturally-convinced, flip-flopper, what is the Biblical reason for infant baptism?

A good starting point is the close connection between circumcision and baptism in verses 11 and 12 where the terms are used essentially interchangeably. In verse 11 Paul refers to the Colossians having been circumcised with a circumcision made without hands which he calls the “circumcision of Christ” and, in the same context, as “having been buried with him in baptism”. These statements reinforce the understanding that God's covenantal promises to Abraham are an *everlasting* covenant as the Genesis 17

passage states. And just as circumcision was a required sign for members of covenantal families of Israel, so baptism is required for those who are part of families that are spiritual Israel today. That is, Christian families. So a significant part of the argument for infant baptism rests in the reformed recognition of God's faithfulness in the covenants he has made. God keeps his promises. God does not change as history unfolds. So physical circumcision, required under the old covenant, still has its analog of baptism instituted under the new covenant by Christ. Though the requirement for physical circumcision passed away with the old covenant, both circumcision and baptism serve as a sign and seal of God's everlasting covenant made with Abraham and his family – those God chose to be his people.

In Acts 2:38-9 we *again* see God's emphasis on how he works in families. Peter concludes his sermon at Pentecost with the words, "*Repent and **be baptized every one of you** in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For **the promise is for you and for your children** and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.*" The promise is for believers **and** their children. This emphasis on God's working in families is a great reassurance and comfort to us as parents who care deeply about the spiritual welfare of our children. Paul gives *another* indicator of the special status that children of believers enjoy. It is similar to the status of inclusion through the sign and seal of circumcision that children born under the old covenant had. We find this in the discussion of marriage in 1 Corinthians 7:14 where Paul says, "*For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. **Otherwise** your children would be **unclean**, but as it **is**, they are **holy**.*" There's a great note about this in the Reformation Study Bible, which says this is, "a striking affirmation of the special character of the home in which at least one parent is a believer. In Old Testament language, the whole family is regarded as being in covenant with God. Even the spouse who refuses to believe comes under the influence of God's work-much more so the children who are not *old* enough to profess their faith. Accordingly, Reformed theology has viewed this verse as providing part of the rationale for the baptism of children."ⁱⁱⁱ

Finally, although the Scriptures neither *explicitly* affirm nor deny the validity of infant baptism, there are several cases in the New Testament where it is stated that whole households were baptized. These include Lydia and her household, all of the household of the Philippian jailer, and the household of Stephanus. It seems highly unlikely that none of these ancient households were without some young children.

So that's the short view of the reason for infant baptism. Elders and deacons in the PCA take this view, but members of PCA churches may agree or disagree on this point of doctrine. Let me suggest that whenever you come across a disputable issue, you follow the example of the Berean church. Go to the Scriptures to see if what is said is true. Test everything by the truth of the Bible. It seems to me that controversies in interpretation of the Bible are a very effective way that God motivates us to read, study, and meditate on his Word! As we seek to be convinced about disputable matters in the

Bible, may we always focus on the essentials, the fundamental teachings of Scripture, rather than get sidetracked in controversy. So Paul's comment about baptism in 1 Corinthians 1:17 is apropos here: "For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel..." As we debate the teachings of Scripture may we never lose sight of Christ and his Gospel!

That said, let's step back from the *awkwardness* of circumcision and *controversy* about baptism and notice a much more important point that emerges from this passage. This is the idea, no, not the idea, but rather the *reality* that we are **united** with Christ. Let me say that again, if you are a Christian you are *united* with Christ. The New Testament repeats this often with the expression "**in him**". As Christians we are inextricably linked with, associated with, filled with, joined with, in relationship with, identified with, in fellowship with, and yes, **united** with the very Son of God. We saw this expression, "in him," three times in last week's passage. "*Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him,*" "**rooted and built up in him,**" and "you have been **filled in him.**" These are examples of the implications of our union with Christ – in our everyday lives we are to be directed by him. As we *walk* through this life our every step is with, and should reflect, Christ. We walk in him; he directs our life. And though we come to Him deficient in so many ways he does not leave us stuck on stupid. We are rooted in Christ like a weeping willow tree, planted by a stream. It flourishes because its roots have a constant supply of water. Similarly we are built up in him. The image is of a building that is in the process of being built – added onto day after day – think of the Freedom Tower in New York City. Have you seen the time lapse construction video? It's impressive. As you watch, structure rises out of nothing, floor upon floor, upon floor until, at last, it overtakes and towers above the rest of the city. Our life in Christ is not static we are constantly being built up in him, because of our **union** with him. And finally we saw last week that we are *filled* in him. Whatever is lacking in us, Christ can, and will, complete. Though we are a work in progress, we never lack in the essence of life because we are *in him*.

Our passage *today* also drips with this idea, this reality, that we are united with Christ. We have seen that "*In him... [we] were **circumcised.***" That is, we bear the sign and seal of God, identifying us as God's beloved, covenant people. And again we are buried with him in baptism and raised with him whom God raised from the dead. Because of our union with Christ our old life is dead – we are dead to sin - and we have been raised to live a new life in Christ. Because we are in Christ we have direction and purpose, are being changed for the better, have all we truly need, are intimately marked as God's beloved, and are made alive from life-less.

So, mindful of being "in Him," let's go on to verses 13 and 14: "*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.*" The first thing that strikes me about verses 13 and 14 is the state we were in before we came to Christ. We were dead! We were not OK. We were not basically

good but in need of self-help. We were not ailing. We were not weak. We were not a mix of sinner and good person. We were not the damaged product of a bad environment. We were DEAD! We were lifeless, helpless, hopeless. DEAD, DEAD, DEAD. Why were we dead? Trespasses and uncircumcision. We've talked about uncircumcision – remember what Jeremiah said? The uncircumcised were under the “fiery wrath of God” - spiritually dead. It was a done deal. *And* we were dead in our trespasses. Trespasses are sins. We were dead in our sins. The particular Greek word that Paul chooses here is *paraptomata*. *Paraptomata* is derived from a classical Greek verb often used of intentional falling, as of throwing one's self upon an enemy; and this is the prevailing sense in the Biblical Greek, indicating reckless and **willful** sin.ⁱⁱⁱ So not only were we dead and excluded from God's family, but we deserved it! We were not incidental sinners we were “paraptomata” sinners - reckless, willful sinners under God's fiery wrath and *rightfully* condemned.

But wait! This sentence and state of death has been overcome. Our omnipotent, all powerful God **made us alive**. Not because of anything in us, the willful, reckless sinners, but he has made us alive **together with** Christ. Because Christ was willing to be united with us at great personal cost, God actually made us alive **with** him. God has forgiven our willful, reckless sins because we are **in** Christ.

There **is** a potential problem here, though. The God of the Bible is not only loving, but also righteous. He is perfectly just and fair. That is his nature. Just as Hebrews tells us it is impossible for God to lie, so it is impossible for our righteous God to break his promise and neglect to punish sin with death. So how can a righteous God let my sins go and transfer me **from the domain of darkness** and **to the kingdom of his beloved son**? As verse 13 states he *has “forgiven us all our trespasses.”* Verse 14 goes on that he cancelled the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This is not a trifling matter. The terminology is that of a courtroom. We stand as defendants and the prosecution has a record to use against us. We are a slam dunk conviction. We look up at an all-knowing, all-powerful, fair and wholly righteous judge about to pronounce verdict. But he does not say “GUILTY.” He does not even say “NOT GUILTY.” Instead, with powerful, loving voice we hear “INNOCENT!” Even as a slimy, guilty sinner we know *something* is amiss here. “INNO-WHAAAAAAT”!!!!?? “Yes, I said INNOCENT.” How can this be? This is the Gospel, the good news. As verse 14 concludes, God has taken this record of debt that stood against us and set it aside, nailing it to the cross. I like the actual Greek words here. It literally says that “*he lifted it up from the middle*” and nailed it to the cross. He did not take up our sins haphazardly or gingerly, but rather, grabbed them right from the middle. He got them all and then nailed his only son with every, single, stinking, scummy, sickening, spiteful sin we've ever or will ever commit. As Paul said he made him who knew no sin to be made sin for us. Then he took that fiery wrath that we deserved and poured it out on that beloved, innocent son. Can you imagine doing that to your firstborn child? Oh – the incomparable grace of God that he loved us so much that while we were yet sinners he did that to his **son**! I cannot *fathom* how much he loves us now that we are *his*; circumcised by the circumcision of Christ, and buried with him in baptism. As Paul said

in 1 Corinthians 2:9, “... *no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him...*”

I am now going to speak to each one here today. And, as Peter and John said to the lame man in the temple who God was about to heal, I'll say to you: “**Look at [me]**”. Have you put your faith in Jesus to pick up your sins from the middle and nail them to his cross? If you were struck by lightning right now and today found yourself before the judge of heaven and earth what would you tell him about your sins? I know many here know their only hope is trust in Christ to **take away** their trespasses and **give to them** His righteousness. That is the gospel offer.

But if that's not where your head is at, I hope that, to **you**, this is an *interesting* question. If lightning struck, what would you tell a holy God about *your* sins? *I* think it is interesting that as humans we often suppress and procrastinate when it comes to the existential questions. Who am I? Why am I here? Is God real? What is the purpose of my life? What do I do with my sin? What will happen to me when I die? These are hard questions. These are important questions. They take time to answer. You have plenty of time right?

[CLATTER!!! Pick up power panel cover with hole blown in it.]

Lightning can strike when we least expect it. While all the Faroos were in Maine eating and drinking and giving in marriage Erin to Mathieu, lightning struck and blew this hole in our power panel at home in Virginia. It started a fire in our basement that by God's grace went out. While we were [getting] fat, dumb, and happy one moment, the next moment our lives might have changed forever. Lightning strikes!

If the Gospel is beginning to make sense to you, don't wait around. The pastors or elders here today would love to answer any questions you have about belief in Christ. Don't wait. Lightning strikes. Don't wait to put your faith in Christ. With the love of Christ, and the lingo of Nike, put your faith in Him. Just Do It!

OK, we've done show and tell, issued an altar call (I'm serious. Just do it!), and now reached the last verse in our passage! Halleluiah! Months ago Dave Silvernail gave today's sermon the title, “A Supreme Triumph.” The title is based on verse 15, “*He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.*” Who are the rulers and authorities that Paul is talking about here? The Pharisees and Temple Rulers? The sometimes cruel Romans who held Paul in prison as he penned these words? The diabolically evil Emperor Nero, who most likely was the one who eventually executed Paul, as well as countless other Christians? Perhaps. Or these rulers and authorities *may* represent the prevailing deceptive worldviews that are foisted upon us by false religion, secularism, political correctness, the winds of the time, and the popular culture. Or perhaps Paul is speaking here about **demonic** rulers and authorities. He did that in Ephesians 6 where Paul says: “*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might... For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood,*

but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” Paul recognizes that we are in a spiritual battle. We are wrestling against powerful and evil, cosmic **spiritual** forces. Peter also warns us saying: *“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”* So whether physical, philosophical, or spiritual we are in a battle. But the good news is that we are not in it alone. We are in Christ and Christ has **triumphed**.

When we think of triumph today it's usually in the context of sports - the triumph of victory - fist pumps, ball spikes, and end zone dances. These are great moments. But in Paul's day the triumph was more than just the momentary satisfaction of a grand slam homer, hat trick, or end zone catch. The triumph Paul has in mind was a **momentous** celebration of victory in war. It meant safety, security, and well being for the victors and the utter devastation, humiliation, and misery for the conquered.

In Kent Hughes commentary^{iv} on Colossians 2:15 he summarizes Plutarch's description of the 3 day Triumph given the Roman General Aemilius Paulus upon his return from capturing Macedonia (168 BC): Great scaffolds were erected in the forum and along the boulevards of Rome for spectator seating, and all Rome turned out, dressed in festive white. On the first day, 259 chariots displayed in procession the statues, pictures, and colossal images taken from the enemy. On the second day, innumerable wagons bore the armor of the Macedonians. As Plutarch tells it:

...all newly polished and glittering; the pieces of which were piled up and arranged purposely with the greatest art, so as to seem to be tumbled in heaps carelessly and by chance: helmets were thrown upon shields, coats of mail upon graves; Cretan targets, and Thracian bucklers and quivers of arrows, lay huddled amongst horses' bits, and through these there appeared the points of naked swords, intermixed with long Macedonian sarissas. All these arms were fastened together with just so much looseness that they struck against one another as they were drawn along, and made a harsh and alarming noise, so that, even as spoils of a conquered enemy they would not be held without dread.

Following the wagons came 3,000 carrying the enemies' silver in 750 vessels, followed by more treasure. On the third day came the captives, preceded by 120 sacrificial oxen with their horns gilded and their heads adorned with ribbons and garlands, next Macedonian gold, then the captured king's chariot, crown, and armor. Then came the king's servants, weeping, with hands outstretched, begging the crowds for mercy. Next came his children. Then King Perseus himself, clad entirely in black, followed by endless prisoners. Finally came the victorious general,

...seated on the chariot magnificently adorned, dressed in a robe of purple, interwoven with gold, and holding a laurel branch in his right hand.

This triumph of a Roman general was glorious, but can't compare with the

cosmic triumph of Christ our God and King. If we *really* thought about, it why would we trust in our own abilities to keep us safe? Why would we ever be anxious? Why would we submit to the temptations of Satan and end up devastated like the Macedonians? Why would we? But *I* do, and we do, and all too often. We lose sight of two things: 1 – We are united with Christ. 2 – Christ is supremely triumphant. That combination cannot fail. We are in Christ and he is triumphant over all. Our only problem is that we have spiritual ADD. We forget who we are in Christ and who Christ is. The antidote for spiritual ADD is simple: resynch your mind constantly with the Bible. Read the Scriptures daily, meditate on God's Word constantly – blessed is the one who meditates on it day and night, teach it to your children when you rise, as you go through your day, as you go to bed. This helps us remember that as Christians we are in Christ and he is triumphant.

So let me encourage you with a closing barrage of Scripture. Here are nine Scriptural implications of being **in Him**, the Supremely Triumphant One. You will find this list in your bulletin. Please take it out and follow along with me. I urge you to pick one of the nine to focus on this week as an antidote for *your* spiritual ADD. Which one speaks to your heart today?

1. In Him we are loved: *Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us.* 1 John 4:15-16
2. In Him we are cleansed: *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.* 2 Corinthians 5:21
3. In Him we are safe: *In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were **sealed** with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the **guarantee** of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.* Ephesians 1:13-14
4. In Him we are free: *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.* Romans 8:1-2
5. In Him we are enriched: *... in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge...so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift...*
Colossians 1:5
6. In him we have purpose: *To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.* 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

7. In Him we are directed: *By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.* 1 John 2:5-6
8. In Him we are fruitful: *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.* John 15:4-5
9. In Him we are bound for eternal glory: *And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.* 1 Peter 5:10

As Paul said: Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. Phil 4:8-9

Christ has triumphed, we are in Him. Think about these things.

Take a moment to pray about them, and then I'll close...

Dear Jesus our Triumphant Lord, we thank you that you have loved and cleansed us and sealed us with the Holy Spirit as a guarantee so that we are eternally safe in you. May we ever remember that we are free in you. Enrich us and sustain us that we might be worthy of your calling and walk in the same way in which you walked. Lord Jesus, may we abide in you and bear much fruit. We delight that by your grace we are bound for eternal glory in you. To you be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

ⁱ Reformation Study Bible, Ligonier Ministries, Orlando, FL.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Vincent, M. R. (2002). Word studies in the NT (1:iii-44). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

^{iv} Kent Hughes, Commentary on Colossians