



## **Colossian 1:13–14**

13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

### **Reflection**

The Bible has a marvellous economy of words and such evocative imagery. For example, yesterday's passage ended the kingdom of light. Today's passage begins

with the dominion of darkness. Reading today's passage, just two verses, Colossians 1:13–14,

13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

The kingdom of light and the dominion of darkness. Such evocative imagery. A rescue. Redemption. Outcasts in the dominion of darkness rescued by the prince of the kingdom of light at the cost of his life. Only death could not defeat him, the darkness could not hold him, and he returned victorious to reign on high. Other texts build on this imagery, 2 Corinthians 4:6,

For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:5,

5 You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.

1 Peter 2:9,

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his

wonderful light.

And today's passage, beginning halfway through verse 12, Colossians 1:12–14,

12 ... [give] joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. 13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

We've been rescued from the dominion of darkness and brought into the kingdom of light by Jesus. And yet, day to day, it is hard to keep these stark realities in the forefront of our minds. Even as Christians

these two utterly opposing realities tend to blur in the blessings and pursuits of modern life.

A friend who works at my church likens modern life to a time when he worked in a nightclub. He'd serve drinks at the bar; beautiful people drinking and dancing the night away without a care in the world, the darkness lit by strobe lights, and laser displays, the DJ mixing the latest music until the early hours of the morning. But at closing time, when the lights were turned on and uncovered what had been hidden in the darkness, reality would descend. Overturned bottles, rubbish everywhere, the floor and almost every surface in the night club covered with all manner of mess and filth. When the music stopped playing, and the drinks stopped flowing, and the

lights were turned on at 4am, the bubble would burst; and the unglamorous reality of squashed hamburgers, cigarette butts, and vomit would descend – especially on the staff whose job it was to clean it all up.

Light uncovers the reality of what is hidden in the darkness. And the light of God's word, the Bible, reveals to us that we live in a dominion of darkness, the kingdom of the prince of this world, Satan. Our culture dances to his tune, and is enticed, and ruled by him. He offers us our hearts everything we desire so that we can amuse our lives away without a care in the world. Until the music stops playing and the light finally turns on and the reality of our situation comes crashing down upon us like a ton of bricks; only then, it is too late.

But this is not just Satan's doing, the great tragedy is that, as we learnt in John's gospel, people prefer the darkness to the light. We prefer living for ourselves and not for others, we prefer always being right, we prefer not doing the things that deep down we know that we should be doing, and we enjoy doing those things that deep down we know aren't right. And so we turn a blind eye to God, so that we can keep being a kind of demi-god over our own lives, claiming his rightful place as our own. John 3:19,

19 This is the verdict: light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

And so we need rescuing; from Satan

and from ourselves. Which is why Jesus came and redeemed us, bought us back, paid for our sins with the blood of his perfect life, the life we should have lived but could not live, Jesus' blood shed for us on the cross. In exchanging his life for ours he paid our debt, took upon himself the punishment that we deserved, so that we might be counted innocent and forgiven in God's sight. Which means that through faith in Jesus' death and resurrection, God has ...

brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves

... into the kingdom of light. For believers this is a present reality. We see clearly. As we look around at the night club of life it's as though the lights have been turned on



and we watch people content to dance their lives away in the muck and filth because no-one has ever shown them anything better or because they've refused to listen when they did.

For the believer the kingdom of light is a present reality; but it also a future reality. And here's the exciting bit. The kingdom of light has not yet been manifested in all its infinite brightness, but we are being made ready for the ultimate inheritance in the light. Right now we see only in part, but one day we shall pass beyond the stars, and when they have burned themselves out, we will shine even brighter than they do. As C S Lewis put it:

Nature. Nature is mortal; we shall outlive her. When all the suns and neb-

ulae have passed away, each one of you will still be alive. Nature is only the image, the symbol; but it is the symbol Scripture invites me to use. We are summoned to pass through Nature, beyond her, into that splendour which she fitfully reflects.

## **Think**

Meditate today both over Satan's dominion of darkness and God's kingdom of light. As 1 Thessalonians says, we are children of the light, children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. Which means both that we should not indulge in darkness but also we should not fear it because Jesus has overcome the world. Are you indulging in darkness? In a secret sin? Or in behaviour that simply

isn't worthy of the Lord?

As we grow as Christians and continue to walk in the light, deeper layers of sin in our lives are increasingly exposed. The process is painful and wonderful at the same time. Perhaps probe your conscience today. What is the Holy Spirit teaching you about holiness? What behaviour or habit is he bringing to your attention in order to refine you and bless you by helping you put an end to it for good? Is it materialism, wanting more and more of what you have enough of already, continually improving and upgrading your possessions and being dissatisfied with what you have, thinking more about stuff than you do about God, caring more for material things than for the people that God has put in your life?

# Pray

Close today in prayer. If you're a follower of Jesus pray a prayer of thanksgiving to our great rescuer. If you are not yet a believer, and if by the power of the Holy Spirit God's light has come flooding into your heart today, then why not invite Jesus to be your Lord and Saviour right now? It's as simple as Romans 10:9,

9 if you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.