



# **THE GREATEST BLESSING**

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**ISAIAH 9:6-7; COL 3:14-17**

GRACE COMMUNION INTERNATIONAL, NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA

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## **SCRIPTURE READING ISAIAH 9:6-7; COL 3:14-17 (ESV)**

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**Isaiah 9:“6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

**3 7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.” (Isa 9:6-7 ESV)**

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**(Col 3:14-17 ESV) “14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.**

**And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.**

**5 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.**

**17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (Col 3:14-17 ESV)**

THE GREATEST BLESSING

6

**THESE ARE WORDS OF THE LIVING GOD**

**THANK YOU FATHER FOR GIVING US SO  
MUCH IN JESUS CHRIST**

**AMEN**

## THANKFUL FOR MANY THINGS

**Canada – land of Plenty**



**Land of Want**



In Canada, we ought to be thankful that we live in the land of plenty. We can be thankful that the last time Canada was involved in a world war was 1945 – 74 years ago.

People in Canada as well as Christians in Canada benefit from all these special blessings.

Physically speaking, followers of Jesus do not all live in physical prosperity compared to the rest of the world. Many, many Christians live in places where there are wars, famines and extreme poverty. God is working with those people just as he is working with us.

The question we can ask during this Thanksgiving weekend is, “What is the most important blessing that the world has whether he knows it or not and what is the most important blessing for us as disciples of Jesus?”

We all know the answer but today, let us think about the greatest blessing that the world has received namely Jesus, the incarnate son of God sent forth to the earth by our loving Father to heal us from a grave illness which is death.

Before we consider this awesome blessing, let us think about God's character who is one in three distinct persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We must realize that all three persons of the Trinity are equally divine inhering or indwelling when another in perfect love. The three persons of the Trinity have different functions.

Let us first begin with what God reveals in his word about his relationship with us.

**8 “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” (Ge 1:27 ESV)**

*God knows everything about us and he still loves us.* **“So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.” (1Jo 4:16 ESV)**

9 *We can never earn salvation.* **“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” (Ro 3:23 ESV)**

*Good news:* **“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Ro 6:23 ESV)**

10 *We are loved from eternity because of who God is: “but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Ro 5:8 ESV)*

*God the Father loves this world, loves people. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (Joh 3:16 ESV)*

|| *God the Father gave us his Son who willingly came to the earth to rescue us from sin. “4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

**5 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,” (1Ti 2:4-5 ESV)**

12 *God has reconciled the world to himself in Christ. From God's point of view, because of what Jesus did in our place, people are forgiven and guiltless.* **“18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.” (2Co 5:18-19 ESV)**

It is important to understand that love must be reciprocated. The world is reconciled to God in Jesus Christ but that reconciliation must be accepted.

**“20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 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 Co 5:20-21 ESV)**

God will not force his reconciliation upon us. He will not force us to love him. Once we realized that we have been reconciled to God and that he loves us, we must accept his love, forgiveness and reconciliation.

Even on the human plane, I can love someone but it doesn't mean that the other person will love me. I cannot force anyone to love me.

In a funny kind of way, we probably all experienced this in high school where we may have had an eye for someone and the other person was absolutely not attracted to us. Love demands mutuality.

In marriage, it is a mutuality that requires commitment. Marriage reflects the higher relationship that exists between God and the church as Paul tells us.

Why is all this good news that we are reconciled to God in Jesus?

### 13 OUR UNDERLYING CONDITION: SINNERS

**“Sin is an underlying state of alienation from God. It is like a flaw in human nature—not a flaw created by God, but a crisis resulting from the fallenness of humanity. It expresses itself at every level of human existence—personal, social and structural.”** (Intellectuals Don’t Need God and Other Modern Myths by Alister E. McGrath, page 134.)

Sin can be compared to an illness. There is something radically wrong with us.

When we are born, we are alienated from God. Sin does not refer to individual acts of sin, whether sins of omission or sins of commission.

Individual sins are a reflection of our fallen state. Individual sins are a reflection of our alienation from God. They are the symptoms of our fallen condition. Sins are rooted in our condition of sinfulness.

If we can use an analogy, we are all born sick unto death.

What are some of the symptoms of this terrible condition called sinfulness, fallenness and darkness we are in before being rescued.

## MORBID FEAR OF DEATH

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**“14 ¶ Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,**

**15 and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.” [Heb 2:14-15 ESV]**

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## FEELING OF BEING UNFULFILLED, OF BEING EMPTY

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God is what is missing.

**“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is of no avail. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.”  
(Joh 6:63 ESV)**

## 16 SIN CAUSES A SENSE OF MORAL GUILT



God's Perspective  
when we are in Christ.

**“21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.” (Col 1:21-23 ESV)**

We need to remember that Jesus has bore all our guilt on the cross. Our responsibility each day is to stay attached to him. He will present blameless on the day of judgment.

**“7 so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, 8 who (God the Father) will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1Co 1:7-8 ESV)**

As human beings, we want to try to reach for perfection in some ways but we can never attain. It causes frustration that is beyond us to solve.

## 17 SIN CAUSES US TO WANT TO HIDE FROM GOD

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**“6 To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.**

**7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot.**

**8 *Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*” [Ro 8:6-8 ESV]**

We want to ignore what he tells us about who he is or about how to live in his grace as his children.

Sin also blinds. While in sin, before we accept God’s rescue when called, we are in darkness.

## SIN ENSLAVES US



**“24 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?”**

**25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.” (Ro 7:24-25 ESV)**

**“1 ¶ Therefore seeing that we are a part of such a great company of martyrs, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that so easily entangles us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy set before him endured the cross, indifferent to its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb 12:1-2 KJV\_2011)**

**Entangles = (figuratively) a serious hindrance that "encircles" (hampers) someone who desperately needs to advance. (From: <https://biblehub.com/greek/2139.htm> HELPS Word-studies)**

**“Sin entangles us. It is like a mighty swamp; once we are trapped, we are unable to break free. Someone has to pull us out. It is like an electromagnet, holding us as if we were iron filings. Someone has to return the current off if we are to break free. It is like gravity, which drags everything to the ground. An apple suspended on its own in midair will fall to earth, just as a human being will fall into sin. It is like being addicted to a narcotic. We find that we cannot break the habit ... The power of sin can be broken through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which liberates us from the**

stronghold of sin.” (Intellectuals Don't Need God Another Modern Myths by Alister E.McGrath page 136)

## THERE IS ONLY ONE HEALER

**“4 ¶ Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.**

**5 But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed.” (Isa 53:4-5 ESV)**

We do not have to prove the fact that we are not born believers but we become believers once God opens our mind through the Holy Spirit as we are called to place our trust in Jesus in faith.

God is the healer of our soul. We are born with a deadly illness which leads to death.

Jesus heals us by giving us a new life.

But even in this new life, sin remains present. We are like patients in a hospital. We know we are going to be perfectly healed. In Christ, led by the Holy Spirit, God gradually makes healthier.

In this life, we are being transformed into the likeness of the man Jesus. We will only see the complete healing at the resurrection. That is why we live in faith and in hope. (next slide)

- 20 • **“The justified is at one and the same time for the sinner and righteous. He is a sinner in reality, but righteous by the same sure imputation and promise of God that he will continue to deliver him from sin until he has completely cured him. So he is entirely healthy and hope, but a sinner in reality.”** (Idem page 140)

It has been said that the church is a hospital for sinners. Being attached ahead, to Jesus into other members of the body is of utmost importance. We cannot neglect it.

So what is the greatest blessing that outweighs all other blessings?

It is the gift of God the Father who in Jesus Christ has reconciled the whole world and himself not counting our sins against us! (2 Corinthians 5)

The greatest gift to humanity is God's love towards us and his desire to spend eternity with all of us as his adopted children!

As members of his church, let us continue to receive his love and to love him in return by willfully and lovingly submitting to his will!

May your celebration of Thanksgiving tomorrow and every day increase in joy because in Christ, our slavery to sin is ended. We no longer feel the need to run away from God knowing as we have the sure hope and assurance that we are God's beloved!

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**“16 That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick.**

**17 This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: ‘He took our illnesses and bore our diseases.’” (Mt 8:16-17 ESV)**

There is only one Dr. to heal this terminal illness and this is Jesus.

Except illness and trust Dr.