

# THE JOY OF GENEROSITY

1 CHRONICLES 29:6-10

Lined writing area consisting of 16 horizontal lines for notes.

NEW

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# KAINOS MOMENT

Each week, set aside some time to reflect on this devotional as you prepare for your *Kainos* commitment.

## EMBRACING GOD'S POSITION AND PRIORITY IN OUR LIFE

This *Kainos* journey continues to be a thrilling exploration of both what God is seeking to do THROUGH us as well as what He is seeking to do IN us. As we wrestle with our role as disciples of Jesus, let's look at a passage of scripture in which two men gave to God very differently. Consider the story of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4:2-5:

*"Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. And Abel also brought an offering to the Lord — fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast."*

Many translations even say in vs 5, 'The Lord accepted Abel's offering but rejected Cain's offering.' A strong statement indeed.

Some key words are found here in this passage. It says, "In the course of time, Cain brought 'some' of the fruits off the soil as an offering to the Lord." In the course of time. As in, not first. But actually quite the opposite of first. After all of the crops had been produced, after everything had been provided to Cain and he could see what had been given to him, then and only then he would give to the Lord. He was essentially a "leftover giver." He gave once everything had been accounted for, and then Scripture says he gave "some." Now here's the interesting thing: We don't know how much he gave — either in percentage or amount. It is possible that the percentage or the amount of his crops could have actually been a larger dollar value than the dollar value of Abel's first and fattest sheep. We don't know because the Scripture doesn't tell us. All we DO know is that Abel gave first, trusting that God would provide, and Cain gave AFTER God had already provided.

Now some of us may not know much about raising livestock, but it's essentially a commission-based job like many of the jobs some of us have today. What if the other sheep that year ended up being no good and died off and did not produce for Abel as those firstborn did? What if they got diseased or stolen before they could produce? He gave the firstborn and the best portions of the meat to the Lord, not knowing what the rest of the year would look like. Shouldn't Abel have ensured that he was ok and taken care of first in an economically uncertain industry like shepherding?

See, the only difference in how those two men gave is that one's giving governed the rest of his economic situation, and the other one's giving was governed by his economic situation. Which are you? Be as honest as you can. God seeks to do a NEW thing at Houston's First, and He doesn't simply seek to do something THROUGH us; He seeks to do something IN us as well. As you have been praying about your *Kainos* commitment, are you truly asking God what first and best would look like for you or for your family? Or are you consulting your spreadsheet of other pre-existing commitments first so that you can give God "some" "once you evaluate the harvest that will be produced.

This *Kainos* journey is not primarily about raising \$93 million dollars. If you feel that, then you've missed the point. This *Kainos* journey is about God doing something IN us as much as it is Him doing something THROUGH us. The commitment card you received for *Kainos* (reference pgs 64-65) is a discipleship tool — a facilitator of this theology of first and new. It is a tool that will cause us to pray about truly acknowledging God is first above all the other priorities in our life and that He seeks to do a NEW work within us. What might He be seeking to do in you?

# THE GOSPEL'S FORGIVENESS

SUN, OCT 31, 2021 | COLOSSIANS 2:4-15

## MEMORY VERSE

*"So then, just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, being rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, and over-flowing with gratitude."*

Colossians 2:6-7 CSB

**READ:** Colossians 2:4-15

## INTRO:

We need to reaffirm that the worldwide pandemic with its accompanying masks, lockdowns, and bans on public gatherings has produced isolation. Loneliness has produced another epidemic of drugs, suicide attempts, and stress.

Jesus Christ resides in us. We do not need to look anywhere else for our treasure or value. Paul writes to the Colossians because these false teachers said that Jesus Himself was inadequate and could not provide all they needed for a full spiritual experience.

Paul tells the Colossians that Jesus is the fullness of God and that they have been given fullness because of their relationship with Jesus. Paul tells them in this chapter not to look for other treasure when the true treasure is already theirs – in Jesus.

## UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT:

As he wrote this letter, Paul feared the Colossian believers would allow themselves to be deceived by people promoting false doctrine (2:9). He struggles in this concern because he knows these people have not yet met him personally and he fears they will not see his teaching with the weight of truth it deserves.

Paul teaches here how to avoid being deceived. Paul's objective is that believers be encouraged as they are united in love and settled in their understanding of the truth. These believers were under attack. However, they were standing strong. When the enemy attacked, the Colossians stood firm. They did not get their truth from the latest popular fads (2:18). They were "rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith" (2:7). The contrast between our former lives (2:13-14) and Christ's triumph (2:14-15) could not be more apparent.

# EXPLORE AND APPLY

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION/REFLECTION

### KEY POINTS, PART 1 – vs. 4-7

- We need to keep making spiritual progress.
- We should watch out for spiritual pitfalls.
- We need to draw on the things God has given us to gain spiritual strength.
- We need to be rooted in Christ alone.

### vs. 4-7

1. What are some of the descriptions of spiritual progress Paul talked about in this passage? What does each description teach?
2. Have you ever felt that you have stopped growing spiritually?
3. What are some of the consequences of being spiritually stagnant?

### KEY POINTS, PART 2 – vs. 8-15

- Make certain you have a biblical worldview rather than one based on the perspective of popular culture.
- Give thanks for forgiveness, redemption, and reconciliation.
- Understand that Christ's resurrection is the pivotal point not only of world history but also of your salvation.

### vs. 8-15

1. What are some modern equivalents to persuasive "arguments that sound reasonable" (2:4), "philosophy and empty deceit" and "human traditions" (2:8)?
2. Contrast basing one's worldview on the "elements of the world" instead of on Christ (2:8b).
2. How did Christ deliver you from "debt" (2:14) and provide His "triumph" (2:15)?

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**KAINOS**



# THIS WEEK'S PRAYER FOCUS:

## DEMOLISHING STRONGHOLDS

God reveals Himself through His Word and prayer. Anticipate today that He will take you to NEW levels of victory as you seek to obey Him.

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 identifies "strongholds" that can be at work in our lives. These strongholds are the well-fortified pathways of thinking, believing, or behaving that sets itself up against the knowledge of God. Any false thing that exalts itself in our minds can cause us to feel controlled, consumed, and overpowered. The thing about strongholds is they keep us from the NEW life we have been given in Christ Jesus. Praise be to God! He has given us the weapons that have divine power to demolish every stronghold.

*"Since the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but are powerful through God for the demolition of strongholds. We demolish arguments and every proud thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:4-5)*

Will you talk with God and ask Him to show you any stronghold that is holding you captive: fear, worry, doubt, idolatry, addictions...? Ask Him if your desire for comfort, security, or fulfillment is found in any other source than Him alone.

Ephesians 6:17-18 teaches us about the weapons of divine power. *"Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit—which is the word of God. Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints."*

Thank God for the NEW things He is revealing to you and spend time confessing any specific patterns of sin operating in your life. Ask Him to show you the Scriptures to pray and gain victory over these areas of your life.

*"The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my rock where I seek refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold." (Psalm 18:2)*

God Himself is our stronghold, He is the fortress that keeps us secure!

**Pray through these passages to encourage you:**

- Ephesians 6:10-18
- Galatians 5:1
- Philippians 4:6,19
- Proverbs 3:5-6

