



GREATER THAN • COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY • COLOSSIANS 1

Greater Than Our Circumstances

A guided conversation from the July 12, 2026 sermon by Jay Reynardus

SUMMARY

We're opening a brand-new series — GREATER THAN, a study through Colossians. Our guest teacher, Jay Reynardus, led Bible Study Fellowship in Miami for over 20 years, and he began exactly where Paul begins: by getting our eyes off the little person in the mirror and onto Jesus, who is greater than every promise this world makes.

Jay was refreshingly honest about himself: the longer he walks with the Lord, the more he sees his own faithlessness, lovelessness, and misplaced hopes. 'Apart from God reaching in and pulling me out and saving me,' he said, 'I would be utterly lost.' That's not despair — it's the doorway to grace. What amazes him now is God's faithfulness toward him, God's love for him, God's hope for him — not the other way around.

From verses 3–8, Paul names the three marks of everyone God has claimed: faith, hope, and love. And every one of them is a gift. 'If we have faith, it's because of God. If we have love for our brothers and sisters, it's because of God. If we have a living hope, it's because of God.' The gospel of grace is a gospel of gift.

Then in verses 9–14 Paul prays — and packs the whole rescue into a few verbs. God has qualified you, delivered you, transferred you, redeemed you, and forgiven you. It's all His work. When we finally see all He has done, the little loves and little hopes of this world get revealed for what they are. As Jay put it: 'It's Him. It's always Him. It will always be Him.'

PRAYER

OPENING PRAYER

Father, You know our hearts and You know our failures, and yet in Your grace You have qualified us, delivered us, and made us Your own. As we open Colossians tonight, take our eyes off the little things and fix them on Your Son. Fill us with the knowledge of Your will. Grow our faith, our hope, and our love — and remind us that every bit of it is a gift from You. In Jesus' name, amen.

START

ICE BREAKER

Jay said we all chase 'little loves' and 'little hopes' — small things we keep putting our confidence in week after week. Name one thing you tend to look to for security or happiness that, honestly, can't carry the weight.

COLOSSIANS 1:3-6 • ESV

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth.

COLOSSIANS 1:9-12 • ESV

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

COLOSSIANS 1:13-14 • ESV

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

DISCUSSION

01 EYES OFF THE MIRROR.

Jay said Paul 'takes the sight of the reader away from himself and immediately points them to God' — the whole letter moves our eyes off the little man or woman in the mirror and onto Jesus. Where do you find your own attention stuck on yourself — your performance, your image, your failures — instead of on Christ?

02 THE HONEST STARTING POINT.

Jay admitted that the longer he walks with the Lord, the more he sees his own faithlessness and misplaced hopes: 'Apart from God reaching in and pulling me out, I would be utterly lost.' Why is that kind of honesty actually good news and not discouragement? Is it hard for you to admit?

03 FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE.

Read Colossians 1:3-5. Paul names faith, hope, and love as 'the distinguishing characteristics of the saints.' Which of the three feels most alive in you right now? Which one feels thin — and why?

04 A GOSPEL OF GIFT.

Jay insisted: 'If we have faith, it's because of God. If we have love, it's because of God. If we have a living hope, it's because of God.' How does it change the way you live to know these aren't things you produce, but gifts you receive? Where are you still trying to manufacture them yourself?

05 PRAY LIKE PAUL.

Read Colossians 1:9-12. Instead of praying for a job, a car, or a raise, Paul prays that they'd be filled with the knowledge of God's will. Jay asked, 'Why don't we have that? Because we don't ask.' How would your prayers change this week if you prayed more like Paul?

06 FIVE THINGS ALREADY TRUE.

In verses 13-14 Paul packs the whole rescue into a few verbs: God has qualified, delivered, transferred, redeemed, and forgiven you — all past tense, all His work. Which of those five do you most need to actually believe about yourself this week? What changes if it's already done?

07 WHEN THE LITTLE LOVES FALL AWAY.

Jay said that only when we truly see all Christ has done do 'the little loves of this world get revealed for what they are.' Not by white-knuckling harder — but by seeing Him more clearly. What's one 'little love' you sense would loosen its grip if you saw Jesus more clearly?

08 A GROUP THAT KEEPS ITS EYES ON CHRIST.

Jay warned that 20 minutes on Sunday won't overcome 25 hours of Netflix during the week — the world will crowd these truths out unless we push them in. How can this group be a place that helps each other keep our eyes on Christ all week — not lectured, not shamed, but genuinely helped?

APPLY LIFE APPLICATION

Jay's whole message lands on one settled truth: it's Him, it's always Him. Pick at least one of these to actually do this week.

- 1 **Chew on it.** Jay begged us to write it down and chew on it: 'You are a recipient of the grace of God, evidenced in faith, hope, and love.' Put that sentence somewhere you'll see it daily. When the world tries to crowd it out, read it again.
- 2 **Pray one of Paul's prayers.** Trade a self-centered prayer for Paul's prayer this week: 'God, fill me with the knowledge of Your will. Let me see You. Show me my sin. Give me faith — I don't have it.' Pray it every day and watch what shifts. Start the 5-day devotional at app.christchurchmiami.org/devo.
- 3 **Name what's already done.** Read Colossians 1:13–14 slowly and say it back as fact: I am delivered. I am transferred. I am redeemed. I am forgiven. Name to God — and to one person in this group — the one you struggle most to believe, and ask them to remind you of it this week.

You don't have to climb your way to sainthood. God has already qualified, delivered, transferred, redeemed, and forgiven you. Keep your eyes on Christ — He is greater than every circumstance you're carrying.

REMEMBER KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ▶ The whole letter moves our eyes off the mirror and onto Jesus.
- ▶ The children of God are recipients of grace — evidenced in faith, hope, and love.
- ▶ Faith, hope, and love are not things we produce; they are gifts we receive.
- ▶ God has qualified, delivered, transferred, redeemed, and forgiven you — all His work.
- ▶ When we truly see Christ, the little loves and little hopes of this world fall away.
- ▶ It's Him. It's always Him. It will always be Him. — Jay Reynardus, on Colossians 1

*He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.
— Colossians 1:13*

Lord Jesus, You reached into the darkness where we lived and pulled us out when we were still Your enemies — and drew us to Yourself. Thank You that we are qualified, delivered, transferred, redeemed, and forgiven, and that none of it depended on us. Take our eyes off the little loves and little hopes of this world and fix them on Your beauty and Your name. Make us faithful. Give us a living hope. Turn our hearts of stone into hearts of flesh. It's You, it's always You, and it always will be. Amen.

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