

# A Sermon for DaySpring

By Burt L. Burleson

## “We’re Being Transferred”

Colossians 1: 9-14

November 21, 2004

**“We’re being transferred.”** Those were the awful words my dad spoke to us when he got off the plane in Beaumont that day. We were going to move from Beaumont to Dallas... or better said, **“Sun Oil Company was going to move us.”** They were shutting things down in Southeast Texas and that meant the Burlesons had to move. We had to leave our grandparents and cousins.

Our Shetland Ponies...

Our piney woods...

All the great forts and foxholes my brother and I had fixed up in our piney playground.

We were being transferred to Big D. It was a long way... longer than I’d ever ridden in an unairconditioned car. It was a long way and it was a different kind of place. Folks started warning us that Yankees lived up there who said funny things like “you guys.” And they told us that there weren’t any trees... and that people didn’t eat rice. It would be a different, new, world.

But that wasn’t all bad, though, because they did have a state fair.

And the Dallas Cowboys... with someone named Bob Lilly, which sounded like a silly name for a football player. As it turned out, he was living two houses down. The new place wasn’t all bad.

You could get three T.V. stations, in Dallas. And they also had something called alleys... and while they couldn’t hold a candle to the piney woods, they weren’t a bad place to hide-n-go seek.

It was a new world Sun Oil Company transferred us to.

In ancient times, they knew this word, “transfer.” Only it wasn’t corporations that moved folks about... rather it was empires. When they would conquer a nation, they’d transfer bunches of folks back to their home.

So... the Israelites had been transferred,

way back in the Old Testament,

to Assyria and then later to Babylon.

They took them off where there were strange people and customs... Middle-eastern Yankees and such.

By the way, the same word was used when the conquerors were conquered and they sent the folks back home. They got transferred again... only this time to their true home.

That’s the word and the image Paul uses. Were we reading in ancient Greek that’s the word we’d read and were we living in ancient Colosse, that’s the image we’d see in our mind’s eye.

Some big powerful nation

transferring a bunch of folks

from one Kingdom to the other.

Yanking them out of one world and plopping them down in another.

Paul says, **“That’s what’s happened to all of us. We’ve been transferred from one Kingdom to another. The whole lot of us.”**

To get this, it’ll be helpful... essential really... for you to see the world the way Paul sees it (which is probably a better take on reality than most of us have as moderns.) The world wasn’t flat, thin, materialistic. In Paul’s view of reality, in his cosmology, there were powers in play and principalities at work,  
 there were realms of being  
 and realms of influence.

There were different kingdoms and what Paul says is that you and I, we were citizens of the one kingdom, this one he calls the kingdom of darkness... and that now, we’ve been “transferred” into this other kingdom, the **“Kingdom of the Son.”** Like Jesus got off the plane one day and said, **“Hey, y’all we’re leaving... we’re being moved.”**

Only the move isn’t so much geographical... is it. These Kingdoms of darkness and light, they seem to coexist in the same place. Kind of like AM and FM radio waves, I guess. Different kinds of waves occupying the same space.

Different waves and different energies... which are manifested in different ways. One’s all scratchy... that AM... realm, full of noisy, angry people, darkly debating one another on talk radio. And the other, FM, plays beautiful music from the 70s all day long. The Kingdom of the Light, for sure.

Not a bad analogy huh?

However you picture it, you must picture it different than the modern world you’ve pictured before, which makes no room for spiritual realities or anything really, beyond what you can taste, smell, touch, see, and hear on this horizontal plane. That’s a very limited universe you’re living in there.

When Paul says, **“We’ve been transferred,”** he isn’t only talking about our spiritual state, this inner being. Nor is he only talking about some destination beyond death. That’s part of it... but Paul sees more... he sees a world with which we are interacting, realms and kingdoms we are citizens of.

Let’s think some about these two realms... we’re acquainted with both. In the Kingdom of Darkness there is great anxiety, it’s a fearful place. In that Kingdom, you are uncertain... you can’t trust in that place.

It is a place of judgement. In the Kingdom of darkness comparison is the name of the game. It’s a gamy realm where folks size one another up all the time and there is endless critique.

It’s an angry Kingdom. Folks living with all sorts of needs and expectations and reacting with anger when what they want and what they’ve got are two different things.

You know this place, what words would you use to describe it.

Selfish... looking out for me and mine.

Out of balance and focus?

Backwards and misaligned?

Depleting, draining, distorting?

It’s dark in this Kingdom, so there is very limited seeing, you know? And people bump into one another a lot... and take such offense at the bumping. It’s dark and so

folks seem to let themselves go, as if who they are and what they do doesn't matter.  
**“Who’s going to see anyway.”**

This is the very real realm that Paul knows exist. Life at a lower level. Life, corrupted and turned around... spoiled. And he understands that this Kingdom has energy and influence. It's all around us... not simply in our minds... but in this world God has made. He would say, **“it has a mind of it's own, even.”**

Everything is connected in God's creation... ask the mystic or the physicist. You are influenced by many things at many levels of being and consciousness.

Struggle with that perspective as you may, tell me you don't feel the influence of this dark Kingdom... the weight of it. Sometimes it feels like a prison. Sometimes we're just lost down in it until something happens and we awaken to something else.

Like someone larger than we are, transfers us into another realm. We awaken to it and... **“and there it is... Right before my very eyes... I was in it all the time, this other realm.”**

You've seen it. Sometimes here on a Sunday morning.

Or maybe in some selfless moment of real love.

Or in with some simply beauty it became apparent to you.

On the other side of great pain.

We see it and know it. It's a Kingdom of Light... the Kingdom of the Son... God's expression. And every aspect of it is an expression of who God is... This Kingdom names God. It's joy, it's energy and fullness. It's shalom... that great sense of goodness that enables you to say with Jullian of Norwich, **“All shall be well,”** and know exactly what she means... you just “get that.”

When you're in that Kingdom, there is a different level of being and energy, you feel it in your body. You don't have to work at having patience, you are patient. When you see yourself in this Kingdom of Light, it changes the way you see everything and everyone.

Grace and blessing flow from you.

Despair disappears...

Fear is cast out...

And there are no shadows... And there is an amazing sense of presence.

Paul says, **“Good news, folks, you've been transferred there, to that Kingdom. You've got new citizenship papers... that's where you are and where you've always belonged.”**

And we say, **“Good... great...”** And sometimes, maybe most of the time for some of us, we believe it and we see it and most of all we live from it in fullness.

But sometimes... strangely... oddly... it's like that Kingdom gets whisked away. Like we can't tune into the waves of it. It disappears. **“Where'd it go?”**

It can happen for me in a flash, someone makes a comment... is perhaps critical and I yank my citizenship papers out for that other Kingdom and it's anger and fear and judgement and suspicion all over again and all over me... and it's like I can't even remember that other place.

It's not even that I'm thinking, "**where'd it go.**" It's like I have that memory problem like those characters on "Memento" or "Finding Nemo." I've blanked it out. I'm consumed by this other realm and begin living again by it's rules. Old meanings return.

Such is our experience...  
or at least it's mine.

And then, miracle that it is, grace finds us again wandering around in that darkness and whispers "**remember.**" Light finds you, maybe while you're singing a hymn with people you love and the darkness melts. Or some truth from above invades you and the illusions are seen for what they are.

That's our experience too. We remember who we are... we remember that Kingdom that we have been transferred to, in Christ. Like Jesus is the great porthole... a "Wrinkle in Time," transporting us to our home in God.

Have you seen this picture up here? Can you see it? A friend painted it in a moment of inspiration. It's the Cosmic Christ. It's Christ as the one in whom all is created and contained and connected (as we read early) And in the icon, Christ is offering it all to us. To you. Here it is, reality, all the fullness of God, dwelling in this one we follow and offered to you.

Come... all you who are weary of bumping about in the darkness... in that dark kingdom. You belong somewhere else. And it is the love of Christ that will take you there. Amen.

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