The People of the Kingdom
gratitude, Kingdomtide, saints, darkness, light, forgiveness
Col 1:12-14
Christians are a different kind of people from a different Kingdom.

INTRODUCTION: (read text...)
--The season of Kingdomtide does not stand alone, but falls within the Pentecost season. Kingdomtide celebrates the growth of the Church in the world before Christ's Second Advent. Without the power of Pentecost filling and motivating Kingdom people, the Gospel doesn't spread nor does Christ's Kingdom grow.
--title: for Kingdom growth there must be something different about the people of the Kingdom. It's the power of the Holy Spirit in us that makes the Church able to testify that HOM.idea. What is it about Christians that our world wants or needs? According to our text, Christians are...

I. A People of Thanksgiving– v.12a, “giving thanks to the Father”
A. For Christians, Thanksgiving Day is all year long [our main ritual celebration bears that name “Eucharist” (thanksgiving)].
B. Gratitude is healthy (helps the immune system). People feel better and live better when they’re grateful! [Few people live to be 100, but the ones I’ve met all seemed to have one character trait in common: gratitude.]
C. The attitude of gratitude, when verbalized, has a refreshing effect... it creates a pleasant atmosphere where, so often, the sound is not grateful but “gripe-full.”

TRANS: Thanksgiving always has an object. For us the object of our gratitude is what God the Father has done for us, and will do for those who come to Christ. So, we are a grateful people, and we are...

II. A People with a Heavenly Destiny– v.12b, “qualified ... to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light”
A. What makes us “qualified” for an “inheritance ... in the kingdom of light”? 1. Going to Heaven requires qualification. [Quality Control isn’t an idea original to American industry. God’s always had that concept about who gets to spend eternity with Him.] Heaven is holy, and our qualification for entering there is holiness– Heb 12:14. Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.
2. The only “effort” for holiness humans can make as is to yield to God’s work in us by the Holy Spirit (It takes effort to say “No” to our own will and say “Yes” to God’s will, and it’s by the power of the Holy Spirit that we can even make that effort.)

B. Being different than the world means seeing ourselves as a “separate” (holy) people (How does being people of God’s Kingdom translate practically?)
1. If we are saints (holy people), we will shun unholy activities– Titus 2:11-14. For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope— the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his own, eager to do what is good. (What an excellent passage to meditate on as we start each day!)
2. BUT how do we keep focused on our spiritual inheritance while we live in this mundane, physical world?– Col 3:1-3. Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 
C. Being different from the world is difficult when we find ourselves still too attached to it. Our answer is in Christ’s Cross– Gal 6:14, May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the Cross of Christ has transforming power! If you join yourself by faith to the crucified Christ, He takes you with Him through death to this world... for us, and will do for those who come to Christ. So, we are a grateful people, and we are...

III. A People of Another Realm– v.13, “brought ... into the kingdom of the Son he loves”
A. Sometimes we get reminders that this world, in its present shape, is not our true home [in the media or daily conversation we meet or hear about people who need to be “rescued ... from...darkness”].
B. What does this rescue from darkness involve? It involves....
1. Trading worldly blindness for divine vision (Satan controls people by blindness– 2 Cor 4:4. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the...
2. Trading worldly falsehoods for a loyalty to truth. **We trade...**
   a. “If I had that, I’d be happy?” for “Happiness is the Lord!”
   b. “I deserve more for myself!” for “I can give others more!”
   c. “Me first!” for “JOY = Jesus, 1st; Others, 2nd; and You last...”
3. Trading worldly ways for Christ-like ways (holding up each area of our life to the light of Christ) **How do we do this?**
   a. **First**, get to know Jesus well **in prayer** (“listening prayer”), & **in the 4 Gospels** (seeing Christ from a variety of viewpoints).
   b. **Then**, ask, “What would Jesus do?”

**TRANS:** As **Kingdom people**, we know the difference between what the dominion of darkness offered, and what we now have in the kingdom of the Son he loves, where we have become....

**IV. A People Who Know God's Forgiveness**— v.14, “we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins”

A. **Our redemption** was costly to God!
   1. Redeemed people stay different by remembering this fact through meeting together, daily prayer, devotional reading, fellowship with believers, & esp. **Holy Communion** [“in remembrance of Me”].
   2. Redeemed people are different when they reach out. (If the price of redemption has been paid, why not let everyone know about it?)

B. **The special earmark of our redemption** is “the forgiveness of sins”
   1. **How can you tell if a person is unforgiven?** Those who haven't experienced forgiveness have a tough time forgiving others.
   2. The foremost feature identifying **Christians** ought to be their ability to forgive others (Jesus is our example from the Cross itself: “Father forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.” Without this testimony, we sow the Gospel on stony ground.

**CONCLUSION:**
Some people are satisfied with the “same old” and don't want “something different.” Others realize that the “same old” hasn’t worked. They’re looking for something different that will change the way they live. Hopefully, they will see in us that **Christians are a different kind of people from a different Kingdom**, and they will want to be part of that kingdom, too.