

Colossians: Jesus Our All In All

Colossians 1:9-14

Colossians 1:9

(KJV) For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

(NIV) For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,

Paul here is so thrilled by the report from Epaphras that these young Colossians believers are bearing fruit from the Gospel! This is the gospel that Epaphras preached to them, and that Paul first articulates in this passage, one of the earliest recorded passages of Scripture:

1Corinthians 15:1-4 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

When the Gospel is faithfully and simply shared and planted in fertile hearts, it bears fruit, and glorifies God:

John 15:8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

The Colossians believers are bearing fruit and glorifying God, and Paul shares in the God the Father's joy! Paul has found in Epaphras a faithful servant, evangelist, and one who disciples and shepherds God's flock well. And so this church is bearing the fruit of love. In fact, the Colossian Church has become known across the land for the love they have for one another. Beloved, the heart of God is that His church walks in His will, and bears the fruit of love:

John 15:16-17 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another.

Oh, church, that we would be known first of all for our love for one another, and secondly for our love for a lost and broken world.

*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: in what ways are you cultivating love within your church family these days? What more would you like to see happening in your church community in the way of love?

Paul is pleased and prompted to pray without ceasing for these Colossian believers. And his prayers are not shallow but anointed, aligned with the Holy Spirit, that each of these Colossian believers would grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ:

2Peter 3:18

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Praying as Paul does in this passage, for the spiritual growth of his young children in the Lord, is the greatest investment we can make for those we are discipling, and for those in our spiritual care. Prayer is our primary work, and deep prayer is evidence of our love for those we want to see growing in the Lord Jesus.

Paul desires that the Colossian believers be filled with the knowledge of God's will, *not* the secret knowledge of the false teachers trying to infiltrate and deceive God's church. And so it is today, so many false teachers not approved, blessed, or anointed of the Holy Spirit - leading God's flock astray, to their own ultimate peril. Believer, be alert, be aware, show yourselves to be established in God's Word and reject counterfeit teachings:

2Timothy 2:15

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Acts 17:11

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

The kind of knowledge that Paul is referring to in verse 9 is not academic knowledge or conceptual knowledge, but rather knowledge that results in action. God's Word and God's will is instructive and results in righteous action:

2Timothy 3:16-17

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

This kind of knowledge of God's will in His Word flows from the head to the heart to the life, and when obeyed bears fruit that can be seen and tasted by those in our sphere of influence. Wow, knowledge that results in *love*, that results in *action*! This knowledge of God's will and subsequent obedience to it is also our most sincere expression of worship to our Heavenly Father:

Romans 12:2

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

So, beloved, stay in the Word of God. Mind your mind and keep your heart:

2Corinthians 10:5

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Proverbs 4:23 *Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*

Colossians 1:10

(KJV) That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

(NIV) so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,

Maybe you have not thought about a life in Jesus.

Is He worthy to surrender your life to?

First consider that He gave His One and Only Son to die for your sins and mine. He loves you. He gave all for you. He is worthy. And all that is left to do is receive the free gift of salvation through His Son Jesus. Will you do that right now?

Dear Heavenly Father, I have heard about what You have done through sending Your Son Jesus to die for my sins, that I may die to my old and sinful life, and now share in the righteous resurrection life of Your Son, whom You raised from the dead. You have truly given everything for me and for that reason alone You are worthy of my belief, my obedience, and my praise. I accept Your Son as my Lord and Saviour forever! Thank You, in Jesus' name. Amen

Now if you have prayed this prayer sincerely from the heart, we would like to hear from you at www.reverenddarren.com. You are a child of God now. Walk worthy of Him. Talk honestly with Him. You are His very own.

What is truly miraculous is how God moulds and shapes His creation into His very own masterpiece:

Jeremiah 18:1-6

The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.

If you really want to connect with the heart of God, daily bow down and submit to the Great Potter, and allow him to shape you into the man or woman He wants you to be. When you cultivate this kind of intimacy with your Lord, you *will* walk worthy, bear much fruit, and glorify God. How important it is then that we intentionally offer ourselves afresh daily to Him - as living sacrifices:

Romans 12:1

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Be sure of this, beloved: there is nothing God won't do for His child who has surrendered to and trusted in His love! Nothing!

So how do we stay connected to God?

John 15:1-17

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another.

Be assured that you will bear fruit and glorify God when you abide (remain) in Him, and He and His Word abide in you! And every good work produced by the knowledge of His will in action is fruit. This is the kind of fruit that can be seen and tasted by those around us.

Paul in this last phrase in Colossians 1:10 refers to "increasing in the knowledge of God" which means that growing in the Lord, or *sanctification*, is a process. This process of God growing us will continue throughout our earthly lives:

Philippians 1:6

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

We grow as we stay connected to God in intimate fellowship and obedience, we grow as we stay connected one to another in community, and we grow as we stay connected to God's Word.

And remember, dear Christian:

We are all works in progress!

Is that good news? I think so.

By now you are seeing the impactful prayer pattern of Paul in all its power and precision. We would do well to pray such prayers for our dear brothers and sisters in Christ.

Colossians 1:11

(KJV) Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

(NIV) being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience,

Do you need strength today? I need strength today. I think we all need strength, especially in these perilous times. And we need more than a pat on the back or a pep talk from a friend. We need supernatural strength! From God Almighty in heaven. This is what I'm talking about:

Colossians 1:15-20

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

It's power and strength through Jesus, isn't it? We need Jesus to strengthen us. Paul here is asking God to strengthen the Colossian church through their relationship with Jesus. This strength is powered by the same Holy Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead. Oh, this power is ours, beloved:

Romans 8:11

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Nothing less will do, as we need nothing less than God to strengthen us for the journey. And did I mention He provides joy for the journey? For the joy of the Lord is our strength:

Nehemiah 8:10

Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.

*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: Recall a time when the joy of the Lord enabled you to endure a difficult season in your life.

Colossians 1:12

(KJV) Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

(NIV) and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.

While Jesus was still ministering on the earth, *He* was the light of the world; when He ascended to heaven and sent down His Holy Spirit to live in us, we became the light of the world. It is so important to remember that it is God who has qualified us to inherit all that Jesus is, and to be light in this dark world:

John 8:12

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

Matthew 5:14-16

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

*STUDY POINT: using a concordance, look up all references to *light* as it pertains to our identity in Jesus Christ. Why is this so important for us to know and remember?

We are a blessed people in that the kinds of gifts that God gives His children are pure and lovely, good and perfect:

James 1:17

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Child of God, these good and perfect gifts can be received by each of us with childlike trust because they come down from the Father of lights, in whom is no scheming or trickery. The same cannot be said for Satan, who abuses, deceives, and destroys his children, tempting them with conditional - and deadly - gifts:

Matthew 4:8-9

Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

Colossians 1:13

(KJV) Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

(NIV) For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,

I love this verse! Each one of us has a story, a testimony of how Jesus reached down into the muck and mire of our sinful lives and the ugly consequences of our transgressions, and He lifted us out of our darkness into His marvellous light, where there is redemption, the forgiveness of sins. I still remember walking the streets of the city as an unbeliever, lost in darkness, blind to the truth, a slave to the flesh, experiencing the sharp pain of consequences for my actions. I often asked myself if there was a way out of this continuous cycle of sin and hopelessness. There was! And God, in His long suffering, was right there watching me, ready to respond to my seeking heart. He provided Jesus for me, whom I was introduced to through a close Christian friend. This friend prayed with me to accept Jesus. What a miracle salvation is!

*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: Recall and revisit your personal testimony, describing your life before and after Jesus rescued you from the power of darkness.

Colossians 1:14

(KJV) In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

(NIV) in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

In a world of relativism, there is a sense that we all get to contribute our version of the truth to the cosmic mix. But the truth is not relative, if it were it would not be truth, and we would have no rock to stand on in our understanding of morality, equality, love, and justice. When God says that we have all sinned and come short of His glory (Romans 3:23) or that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins (Hebrews 9:22) He is stating eternal truth that puts us on trial no matter what we believe. In fact, what we believe will influence us to either receive or reject God's truth, both with accompanying consequences, good or bad.

I hope you have found Paul's prayer pattern helpful for your own prayer life. These prayers are theologically rich while being spiritually effective. This is the heart of God, through Paul, to the Colossian Church.

~ Reverend Darren McClelland