

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Knowing God's Will!

Colossians 1:9-14

Keywords: the Will of God, Decisions, Theology

PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

SermonAudio Blurb: There is a need to understand the plans of God but too often these become confused with our personal dreams for us. In this message we have an opportunity to see how Paul prayed for the church at Colossae to know God's will. We find a simple and straightforward approach that is not wrapped up in paganism or guess work. Rather, it is revealed for us through the Spirit-inspired Word and given so that we walk in a manner that honors God.

I. Introduction.

A. Read Colossians 1:9-14.

1. In this passage Paul is praying for the people in the church.
2. It is not a prayer for a select few in the church. Rather, it is a prayer for all those who belong to Jesus Christ in Colossae.
3. This prayer is instructive to us for it gives us the mind of Paul, but also the mind of the Holy Spirit who is inspiring this letter.
4. Through the work of God in Paul's life these things are the ideas and convictions that drive Paul and motivate Paul as a Christian and he wants us to have the same convictions.

B. Introductory points:

1. Paul had not visited this church before. There were those who knew Paul, but he had never actually been there to strengthen them in the Lord.
2. This is not a church started by Paul. But it is a church that Paul has great concern for. It is a gentile church and he is the apostle God called to minister to the gentiles.
3. This is one of the prison epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon).
4. It is most commonly believed that Epaphras was the founder of this church (cf. 1:7). If you wish, he was their first pastor, but really, he appears to be an evangelist, what we would call today a "church planter" (Col 4:13).
5. There were some very dear friends of Paul in this church as well.

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6. This church was a wonderful church, but it is also quite young in its faith—which brings certain dangers with it.
 - a. Most of the people there had been saved out of a deeply pagan background, one very similar to what we learned about Ephesus last week. And there were still ties and connections that pulled on them.
 - b. The values and thought patterns of that society would press on them, potentially affecting how they thought and made decisions.
 - c. There was much evil in the city and they were not exempt from its effects.
 - (1) There were many temptations and traps that were all about. Immorality was common in this city and its temptation was constantly calling to them.
 - (2) Demonic activity was common and the lies and doctrines of demons flowed freely there at Colossae.
 - d. And though they were a growing church, they had not yet matured, and this resulted in them being vulnerable to error and damage. And so Paul writes this letter to strengthen them in their faith.
7. Apparently it was Epaphras who had visited Paul and informed him of the condition of the Colossian church—it was good news.
 - a. Faith in Christ (1:4a).
 - b. Love of the brethren (1:4b).
 - c. All of this built off of the hope of eternal life that is bound up in the gospel (5).
 - d. And it is because of this good news that Paul prays. It breaks into three parts:
 - (1) The first is Paul's prayer (9).
 - (2) The second is Paul's purpose (10-12).
 - (3) The third is Paul's reason (13-14).

II. Let us know God's will.

- A. Paul's prayer (9).

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1. Paul is in chains. And as he sits in prison he is not complaining, nor did he give up.
2. He and Timothy, along with anyone else who happened to be with him were busy praying.
3. Now, for what is it that he is asking his heavenly Father?
 - a. **First**, that they, as a church, may be filled with a knowledge of God's will.
 - (1) We have messed up the will of God in many ways today. We tend to think of it in a self-centered way. We talk about walking in the center of His will. We spend a lot of time thinking about God's will for "my" life.
 - (2) But this is not how the bible describes the will of God.
 - (3) Rather, if you boil it down to its essence it **is obeying God's word**
 - (a) We long to know the will of God and then spend most of our life resisting the very things that God unfolds before us as if they must be a mistake.
 - (b) You can apply this to any situation. To say it in the words of the Apostle James, we are to be doers of the Word, not merely hearers of the Word of God.
 - (c) But hearing the Word of God is too often all that really happens.

Again, I speak this with experience. I have discovered over the years of giving counsel to people that I seldom really teach them something new. One of the most common things I hear is this phrase, "I know." And it is usually followed by the word, "but." As a church, we cannot be found guilty of this. We need to carefully grow in the Word and as we do, we need to encourage one another to live it out in our lives.

- (4) To know God's will is a work that God does in the life of believers.

It is like people who quit smoking or lose large amounts of weight or something like this. Consistently, these people all say the same thing, something happened in their mind, where they began to simply think differently. There came a conviction that it was a good thing for them to do. They saw the benefits of making this change and it became desirable for them.

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In the same way, we need to have spiritual eyes that see that obeying our Lord does not hinder us, nor does it rob us from good things; rather, it is the very way of life, joy, abundance, hope, and glory. Which is essentially what Paul is saying in the last part of verse 10.

- b. **Second**, he is praying that this would be done in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.
 - (1) A true knowledge of God's will comes with this spiritual wisdom and understanding.
 - (2) Wisdom is the knowing how to best use the truth of the bible in a skillful manner in our life.
 - (3) Understanding speaks of an awareness of what is truth and what is error. It is able to see through deceptions and pretty packaging.
- 4. This is what Paul is praying for on behalf of this church in Colossae. He knows that there are many pressures from the world. He knows that there are many competing beliefs and teachings out there. He knows that it is easy to mistake knowing about godliness and maturity as meaning that you really are godly and mature.
- 5. Next, Paul gives the purpose of wanting them to know God's will.
- B. Paul's purpose (10-12).
 - 1. He wants them to walk worthy of the Lord.
 - a. In Ephesians 4:1 Paul tells the church at Ephesus to walk in a manner worthy of their calling as Christians.
 - b. But here Paul says that they are to walk worthy of the Lord.
 - (1) Here then, is the standard by which we are to judge ourselves and this church.
 - (2) Paul says we are to be worthy of our Lord in how we live out our lives.
 - (3) This means that we must put away any form of the fear of man, where we are motivated by what others think or don't think.

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2. This is restated in a slightly different way by Paul. He says that we are to please our Lord. And this is not merely in some ways, but in all ways. This, again, helps us understand God's will.
 - a. He is not asking for part of us to be committed to Him, but our whole being. There is no aspect, part of our lives that belongs to us.
 - b. A worthy walk is a life fully committed to the Lord.
3. And Paul enlarges on this **by giving four qualities** that help us understand his meaning.
 - a. **First**, to please the Lord is to be bearing spiritual fruit in every good work (10b).
 - (1) We are saved from our sins so that we might do good works that God has prepared for us beforehand.
 - (2) Our Lord is pleased when we are busy working for Him. When we realize that we have been called to a life of service for our Lord.
 - (3) Paul's second letter to Timothy helps us in thinking about this.
 - (a) 2 Timothy 2:19-21.
 - (b) 2 Timothy 3:16-17.
 - b. **Second**, to be increasing in our knowledge of God.
 - (1) Here Paul brings us back to a completed circle.
 - (2) He starts out praying that they would be filled with a knowledge of God.
 - (3) And now he is saying that they are to be busy growing in that knowledge. It is not some passive act. But something in which we are to be cooperating with the Lord.
 - c. **Third**, we are to be strengthened to be able to be steadfast and patient (11).
 - (1) Paul wants us to grow in the knowledge of God because a fruit of this is the production of steadfastness and patience.
 - (2) This is something that is indicative of maturity.

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- (3) This steadfastness comes through a right knowledge that is believed and then practiced. An example of this is 2 Peter 3:15-18.
- d. The final quality is joyful thankfulness (12).
 - (1) It is so pleasing to our Lord when we joyfully thank him for His salvation.
 - (2) Sometimes our prayers about our salvation can almost sound sad, but they ought to sound joyful!
 - (3) It is good news to know that your sins are forgiven!
 - (4) it is good news to know that you have been made a child of God!
 - (5) It is good news to know that you and I shall share in the inheritance along with all other believers in heaven. And God desires that we be filled with a joyful thanksgiving for this.
4. This leads to the final part of this message. The reason for all of this.
 - a. Remember verse 4, Paul had heard of their faith in Christ and out of that news came the fact that Paul was now praying consistently for them.
 - b. And the whole reason is stated for us here in verses 13-14.
- C. Paul's reason (13-14).
 1. He rescued us.
 2. He transferred us.
 3. He redeemed us.
 4. He forgave us.

III. Conclusion.

- A. Beloved, this is a good description of a maturing church and a maturing individual.
- B. We are called to be seeking to grow as a body to understand what God's will is for us as a church.

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- C. This requires us to grow in a knowledge of His Word. And as we grow in that knowledge we are to encourage and help each other obey it.
- D. And as that happens, we become a church that is worthy of our Lord, who pleases him in all ways.
- E. But this is not done in some sort of fear, but out of joy. Knowing that our sins have been forgiven, that we have become part of Christ's kingdom.

Benediction

May the Lord of peace Himself, grant you peace at all times, under all circumstances. The Lord be with you all. Amen.