

## Colossians 1:9-18 He Holds All Things

Good morning and thank you for joining us! We're continuing our vbv study through the book of Colossians, so would you please turn to Colossians 1?

Last week we studied the background of this epistle, and we also saw how Paul had heard the good report from the church at Colosse, a place he never went, a church he never planted, with people he never met. But this letter was crucial for the Colossians as the sinister heresies had crept in, and began drawing people away from true faith in Jesus.

This morning, we'll begin our study by spending some time looking closely at how he prayed for them, as well as looking at communion in a way that perhaps we haven't before.

We're gonna study verses 9-18, and the title of this morning's message is He Holds All Things

Let's pray

It's wisely been said that if you want to humble a Christian, ask them about their prayer life. I doubt there's any of us here who would say we don't need to pray more.

One of the richest studies you can do in the Bible is to study prayers in the Bible. Think about Solomons prayer in dedicating the temple as an example of a beautiful prayer. Hannah's prayer of thanksgiving. Of course, the psalms contain many wonderful prayers

I mention all of that because as Christians it's not uncommon to sometimes feel like our prayer life is in a funk. We're about to study an incredible prayer we can model that will help us be more disciplined in praying.

And as we dig into these verses, the first thing you'll notice is how Paul prays for things we often don't even think about.

We're gonna read the whole prayer, then break it down  
9-11

9 For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;

Let's start verse 9 again.

9 For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, pause here. V9 says "for this reason." What's the reason? Well, the reason was the encouraging report from Epaphras about the Colossians' love in the Spirit for each other and for the Lord. And the encouraging news prompted Paul (perhaps Timothy is included in the we?) to pray constantly for these believers.

So, Paul is always praying for them, and what does he say?

...9 and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

Paul's prayer was that God would fill the Christians at Colosse with knowledge. But this wasn't worldly knowledge, or the secret knowledge that the cults were advertising in their heresy. No, this knowledge is that of God's will.

To know God and what He wants us to do is really our first responsibility as followers of Christ. So, this should prompt us to ask the question. How often in our prayer life are we truly seeking to know God's will? William Barclay used to say, "It so often happens that in prayer we are really saying, 'Thy will be changed,' when we ought to be saying, 'Thy will be done.'"

This was an urgent need for the Colossians. They needed to be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and knowledge so they wouldn't be seduced by the so called "knowledge" advocated by the false teachers that surrounded them.

And what does this knowledge do for us?

10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;"

The word walk is important because the Christian life is not a sprint, is it? No, it's a journey, day by day.

See the knowledge of God's will should be affecting our walk, how we live our lives in a way that would glorify and please the Lord.

To walk worthy in the greek is the word axios which has the idea of 'the same.' **SHOW PIC** The adjective form is describing the scales they would use in a marketplace. See in those days they didn't have the same kind of scales we have today.

Back then when you bought something by the pound, they had the scales and they would put a set of weights on one side and then what you wanted to buy on the other side . **CLOSE PIC**

This is why you see Jesus rebuke those who used dishonest scales, b/c you could say something is 1lb, but shave a few ounces off the weight and who would be the wiser.

So you would take something you wanted to purchase, they would put it on the scale and on the other side use the weight until it weighed down and evened up the scale. And when that happened, they would say Axios- that meant worthy.

It meant the weight of what I'm buying is worthy of the weight that I'm paying for. It's worthy.

And what it's saying here in verse 10 for you and for me is that the knowledge of God's will in our lives is to prompt us to walk worthy, to let our walk be equal to the things that are a reality through what Christ has done. Which means our conduct ought to look way different than those who don't have a relationship with Christ.

Look at the end of verse 10 **increasing in the knowledge of God;**"  
Sadly, in my pastoral ministry, I have met people who have become intoxicated with 'studying the deeper truths of the Bible.'

Usually it starts out because they've been given a book or been introduced to some speaker's teachings. Before long, the 'deeper truths' they discover detour them from practical Christian living.

Over time, instead of getting burning hearts of devotion for living for Christ and loving others, they get big heads and start creating problems in their homes and the church.

Wanna know if you're really increasing in the knowledge of God? Here's how we know-we'll also be growing in grace **2 Peter 3:18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.**

**11 strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power,**  
pause here.

Paul continued his prayer for the believers, asking God that they be made strong with all the strength that comes from God's glorious power.

Can you imagine anything more powerful?

Yet that power is available to believers and to the church so we can fulfill our mission in this world. We need to be strengthened with all might, according to God's glorious power...

...11 for all patience and longsuffering with joy; Boy it's hard to have patience and longsuffering, isn't it? And it's impossible to have patience and longsuffering with joy apart from the Lord.

Paul reminded the Colossians that even though they were surrounded by persecution and false teaching, they had the strength to continue and to stand firm against the opposition.

See it's not the latest Ted Talk, or new bestselling motivational book, or power preacher that causes us to endure with joy. It's God's power that helps believers endure and be patient, filled with joy, even when circumstances aren't the best.

**SHOW PIC** How many people in our lives could be touched if we prayed this way?

Be thankful for their faith and changed lives (1:3-4).

Ask God to help them know what He wants them to do (1:9).

Ask God to give them deep spiritual understanding (1:9).

Ask God to help them live for Him (1:10).

Ask God to give them more knowledge of himself (1:10).

Ask God to give them strength to endure (1:11).

Ask God to fill them with joy, strength, and thankfulness (1:11).

**CLOSE PIC**

12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. Notice verse 12 it is God who qualifies us. Not some degree, not some course of study, not some church. It's God who qualifies us.

And I pray you know this morning that none of us are on probation with God. In Christ we are fully qualified to partake of His blessing of the inheritance.

See an inheritance isn't wages, you can't work for it, you can't earn it. It's God's grace! No matter who you are, or what you've done, it's because of what Jesus has done, we will partake in the inheritance.

But how's this possible knowing He's a holy God?

**13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,** The wording in the original Greek here gives the image of a victorious general relocating his defeated foes.

We've been conquered by Jesus, who transfers us from darkness into His rule of love

This is why Christianity is different from any world religion because it's not about what we do for God. It's what God has done for us!

God hung on a cross because He loves and wants to forgive us. His desire is to set us free and restore us to what we were meant to be.

14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. Redemption has the idea of release by a legal ransom. The price for our release was paid by the blood of Jesus.

Never forget that our Lord Jesus put a price tag on us. How highly did He value us? Jesus valued you and I so much that He was willing to shed His blood and die for us.

Since we have been purchased at such a tremendous cost, it should be clear to us that we no longer belong to ourselves; we have been bought with a price. Therefore, we should not live our lives the way we choose.

Which means if we take our lives and do what we want with them without consulting God for His will, we're actually taking something that does not belong to us, and therefore we are thieves!

V14 reminds us not only has He redeemed us; He has given us the forgiveness of sins. This means that God has canceled the debt which our sins incurred. The Lord Jesus Christ paid the penalty on the cross; it never needs to be paid again. The account is settled and closed, and God has not only forgiven, but He has removed our sins **Psalm 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.**

From verses 15-19 Paul provides one of the Bible's most majestic descriptions of Jesus' deity. In fact, if we were reading in the original language we'd notice a rhythm. Scholars believe these



verses made up a well-known hymn sung in the early church. Apparently, these truths were so vital Paul set them to a catchy beat, so they'd be easier to remember...

### SHOW PIC

In the next four verses, we have the Lord Jesus described: (1) in His relationship to God (v. 15); (2) in His relationship to creation (vv. 16, 17); and (3) in His relationship to the church (v. 18).

### CLOSE PIC

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. Jesus is the image of the invisible God. If you want to know what God is like, all you have to do is look to Jesus. **John 14:9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"**

This is why I mentioned last week the fallacy of judging who Jesus is based on the action of Christians. Church history is an embarrassment-the inquisition, the crusades, persecution of Muslims, of Jews. No, folks we have to point people to Jesus.

Verse 15 specifically describes how Jesus is the firstborn over all creation. The chief Gnostic theologian would be a heretic named Arius. In the third century Arius used this verse to infer that Jesus was a created being - and not truly divine. Arius said, "Jesus was "first-born" - thus, to be born meant he was created - and if created; He couldn't be Creator - and if not the Creator; then He wasn't God."

Today, Jehovah's Witnesses echo this heresy. But remember, in the Bible, firstborn doesn't just mean birth order, it refers to status. Exodus 4:22 called Jacob the firstborn, even though he was born after Esau...

In Jeremiah 31:9 Ephraim is called firstborn, over his older brother Manasseh...

The Greek word *prototokos*, translated "firstborn," doesn't speak of chronology but of priority.

See, firstborn is a title of authority and preeminence. Jesus is not part of God's creation, but over it all.

**16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.** " Think about creation for a moment, there is no way it happened by chance!

The earth travels around the sun about eight times the speed of a bullet fired from a gun.

There are more insects in one square mile of rural land than there are human beings on the entire earth.

A single human chromosome contains twenty billion bits of information. There's no way all of this order came out of some big-bang! Clearly there is a Creator

Have you ever wondered why you were created, why you exist? Here in v16 we're told. We were created through Jesus... and for Jesus.

If I drove my car into the Ohio river I wouldn't get very far. Because my car wasn't made for underwater travel. If I drove it off a cliff I would crash... b/c my car isn't made for in-air flight.

But on the freeway my car does fine, because that's what it was designed to do.

And likewise, human beings were not designed to simply work, and play, and party, and earn, and spend, and save, and sex, and sleep, and eat, and toil, and try, and sweat, and cry, and eventually die.

We were designed for more. We were created for Jesus, and you'll never know real fulfillment apart from a relationship with Him.

17-18

17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ”

18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. Who is the head of CCC? Not the pastor, or the elders, or even the congregation.

Jesus is our CEO! And why wouldn't we want Him to be? I'm a human with clay feet - He's God...

I can't get grass to grow in my front yard - He's the Creator.

I get tired walking up a steep hill - He sustains all things...

V18 says he's the firstborn from the dead. Well in the Bible numerous people were miraculously raised from the dead, but Jesus is the only one resurrected never to die again. He's overcome death.

And this is what we remember with communion.

When scientists study atomic structure, are astounded at the mysteries of it. They don't understand it. Because in the nucleus of the atom you have a cluster of protons revolving around them. You have electrons. There's a problem there because protons should never be in a cluster. If you ever take 2 positive ends of magnets and try to push them together, they push apart. If you switch around and put a negative and a positive end, they join together like that. Opposites attract.

But if you put 2 positive ends together, there's no reason for the nucleus of that atom to stay together.

They don't understand what holds it together and the electrons have a negative charge. They're circling around it. They should collapse right into it. The protons should be blowing apart. Science talks about Coulomb's law of repelling positive charges.

What's holding all that together? I know, and you do too! He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. They all cohere. He's holding it all together. Jesus isn't only the Creator, He's the sustainer. He's holding it all together. He's holding the very atoms in place.

What exactly are we afraid of?

We're told this in **2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us,[fn] not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.[fn] 11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.**

So, listen, The Big Bang isn't at the beginning, it's at the end. You have to remember that this didn't all start with The Big Bang, it ends with a Big Bang. The heavens shall pass away with a great noise. The elements shall melt. That word, Lu-o, they shall be loosened. Whatever is holding them together, they shall be loosened with fervent heat.

And He's holding the whole universe together. So again, I ask, what is it that we're afraid of?

Now you may say OK, big deal. OK I didn't come here for the science project. Hurry up man I'm hungry I wanna get some lunch. What does it all mean?

There is a time for us to take off the sandals of our intellect to walk onto holy ground. Because ultimately what it means is that He is the one who is the creator of all things, the very image of the invisible God who brought everything into existence. And as Adam and Eve sinned, instead of God just loosening and incinerating everything and going with Plan B, what did He do?

He entered into the womb of the virgin. Jesus was born. The Creator could tell Peter to walk on the water, He could tell the dead to rise, He could cleanse lepers. None of that was anything hard for Him, He's the creator and the sustainer.

And because He's the one who's sustaining everything, what it means is that when the Roman soldiers put a bag over His head and began to beat His face, He was holding together the knuckles.

Of those Roman soldiers that were battering the nerve endings in his own face while He sustained that, He sustained the pain of it. When they ripped his beard out of his face, He held together the follicles that ripped and shredded his skin.

He held together the scourge that tore the flesh off of His back. He held together the iron and the nails that went through his wrists and the thorns that went through his brow.

Jesus came into the midst of His own creation, sustained it, and then bore responsibility for the sin of it, and let it all come upon Himself while He sustained the whole thing.

And in that He is just to grant forgiveness for anyone who will come to Him, because for time and eternity He bore responsibility for the fall of his own creation. Entering into the middle of it, sustaining it. Sustaining it as it disfigured Him, sustaining it as it brutalized Him.

He came into the midst of His own creation so that we could see who He is. He said, if you have seen me, you have seen the Father.

This is the God we worship.

Matthew 26:26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed<sup>[fn]</sup> and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."

Matthew 26:27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 For this is My blood of the new<sup>[fn]</sup> covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.