

Colossians 1:9-14

Announcements:

- Kids wing off limits and kids bathrooms
- More space second service (a little bit) - will likely go to three services soon (buying time)
- Submission & Suffering Book live in the bookstore today ("I'm excited to share this book with you all—it's priced just to cover the production and publishing costs so we can get it into as many hands as possible. I really believe in the material: salvation, pilgrimage, conduct, identity, marriage, submission, leading, church life, suffering, warfare, hope")

Please open to **Colossians Chapter 1** (Need a Bible? Raise your hand...)

- Last Time: Intro: Paul (prison), Timothy, Epaphras, Colossae. Planted. Watered. Harvested.
- This Time: Paul prays the most epic prayer with all the good stuff Challenging & comforting

Message Title: Walking Worthy

- Cultivation (v. 9) (education / instruction / growing...)
- Transformation (vv. 10-12a)
- Liberation (vv. 12b-14) (the last step is first, BTW)

Do you want to walk worthy of God with your life? To bless God? Here's what it looks like...

Cultivation (verse 9)

V. 9 - For this reason

- Pause & ponder - What reason? Good report of the Gospel (word of truth; love in Spirit)

V. 9 - Since the day we heard it

- Remember, Epaphras visited Paul in Rome?

V. 9 - Do not cease to pray for you (I'm so blessed by this...)

- Prison prayers (cold, dark, dangerous). Prays not for himself. But for a church he'd never met.
 - How would you pray for a group of Christians you'd never met?
- Do not cease = A lifestyle of prayer. A constant habit. "[James'] knees grew hard like a camel's because of his constant worship of God, kneeling and asking forgiveness for the people." (Hegesippus via Eusebius)
 - (Attitude more so than activity) - Not restricted to a time, place, or formula.
 - Overall, it serves as a good barometer for the health of our communion with Christ.

V. 9 - To ask that...

- Ask is in the present tense - (asking, seeking, knocking (Luke 11; Matthew 7))
- Not material/comfort; not physical health/happiness (though, not wrong). But spiritual growth (highest and greatest things! First things!)
- That (Hina) = Knowledge. Wisdom. Understanding. Paul used these words on purpose in his prayer (satan disguises as an angel of light)
 - Gnosticism. Will talk more about this in the coming weeks. (Gospel was too simple...)
 - False teachers were "in the know" / "with super knowledge" (cultish!)

- (Jesus? Cool... but you need this other/better “knowledge” too...)
- You don’t need “new knowledge,” you need to grow in the “existing knowledge.” (“you are complete in Him” (Col. 2:10)).
- Pray all these things in!

V. 9 - Filled with the knowledge of His will (...heart and soul of the entire prayer right here...)

- Just as easily replace “cultivation” with “education”
- **Knowledge (epignosis):** Intimate recognition, beyond just head knowledge to relational insight.
 - **Gnosis:** gained by experience | **Epignosis:** perfect, precise knowledge (more complete)
 - **Hebrew: Da’at** = intimate knowledge of God in covenant relationship. Hosea 4:6 - “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge... Because you have forgotten the law of your God...”
 - Not a new knowledge or a different form of knowledge like gnosticism), but specifically...
- **His will (thelema):** God's sovereign purposes and desires for creation and salvation. (no one has fully arrived - Paul - I have not yet attained (Phil 3:12)). Christ and His Will.
 - This is one of the highest goals in our life (every class is full on this subject)
 - We want to know with BIG decisions (home, job, spouse, children, missions, etc.); all are part of that, but Paul has something even broader and more complete in mind.
- **Filled (pleroo)** means... To be filled. Also... to make complete, fully furnish, ultimately pervade.
 - Filling to the top or even overflowing, overwhelming. (Cup overflowth! Abounding!)
 - Many are content with being half filled (everything except food!). We love to over eat on physical food. But we under-eat on spiritual food (mere snacks!) (not even ¼ full...)
 - Fully possess or dominate in control / influence. Filled (fully) with fear, anger, lust, etc.
 - Here, filled with knowledge of God’s will so you want what He wants.
 - Filled = Passive = from an outside entity/force...
- Eph 5:17-18 - “Understand what the will of the Lord is: do not be drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living, but be filled with the Spirit” (present ongoing... be continuously filled)
 - We’re actively commanded to receive a passive thing! Huh? How does that work?
 - It’s all about what you’re allowing yourself to be influenced by. Anger? Drunkenness? Spirit? INFLUENCE! (being filled is not just sniffing or sipping, but drinking/gulping)
- It’s passive because God does the filling. But it’s active because we make ourselves available.
 - Picture a sailboat with its sail up... (moved along by the wind, not fighting against)
 - Pleroo also carries the idea of salt permeating meat in order to flavor and preserve it.
 - Total dominating influence and control... (multiple times in Book of Acts)

Whatever fills you, controls you

Paul’s prayer was that they would be filled with: all wisdom/spiritual understanding (how much? all)

- Actually, without these components they are not able to discern God’s will (a practical prayer)

V. 9 - In wisdom (In this digital age, we have endless “knowledge” at our fingertips, but without wisdom we misapply it (medical Googling (WebMD) leads to panic, not peace).

- **Wisdom (sophia):** Practical skill in living godly lives (skilled artisans). Making Godly judgments (Solomon). Applies knowledge rightly according to an absolute moral code (James 1:5)
 - I pray for this all the time, especially when teaching or counseling (do the same!)

V. 9 - And spiritual understanding

- **Understanding (sunesis)**: Lit: Binding together. Completely comprehending. Understand concepts and see relationships between them. Putting pieces together. **Street smarts** (but not like we're seeing in the streets today...)
- Luke 2 - Jesus about His Father's Business. all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding...

V. 9 - **Spiritual**

- **Spiritual (pneumatikos)** - wind, breath, spirit (stuff you can't see usually but matters most!)
- **Emphatic** in the original Greek. Not just any understanding; spiritual understanding. Something we all desire, or should desire (opposite of worldly/demonic/carnal) (like GPS recalibrating)

Wisdom/understanding - To know God & what he asks of us (not my will, but thy will be done)

- Too often when we pray that - we mean, "let me see if that fits within my plans, God..."
- It's not about what we want, but about what God wants! But there's a real tension here.
- **God has a will**. But we also have a will. What Paul means, and what we mean, is that we want God's will to take precedence over our own. Am I willing to be engulfed in His desire for my life? Or do I just want help in a tough decision? Have I decided ahead of time that I will obey?
 - Whatever it costs... wherever it leads... (General vs Specific (perfect) Will of God)
 - For all of this, we need **wisdom & understanding**. Pray and ask for it!
 - Proverbs 2:1-6, CSB - "My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, listening closely to wisdom and directing your heart to understanding; furthermore, if you call out to insight and lift your voice to understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it like hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding." - Pray (always) and search (in the Word!)

Are you filling your mind with the knowledge of His will? Pray and ask...

Paul prayed for cultivation of discerning God's will, now he prays for the transformative power to live it out.

Transformation (verses 10-12a)

Paul's prayer has moved from head and heart to hands and feet. Knowledge & Obedience go together!

- Don't go so entrenched into learning that it causes you to neglect living. (knowledge puffs up)
- From context, you could argue these are part of God's will for the Colossians (therefore, us).

V. 10 - That you may walk worthy of the Lord

- Here's the purpose of all that **Godly knowledge** - it's so that you walk worthy.
- Walk this way (Aerosmith), walk like an egyptian (The Bangles), walk the line (Johnny Cash)
- Throughout the Bible, **Walking (peripateo)** is a picture of one's lifestyle. (Halak in Hebrew)
- Gen. 3:8 - God walked with man in the garden in the cool of the day.
- Psalms 1:1 - Walk not in the counsel of the ungodly. Micah 6:8 - walk humbly with your God.
- 1 John 1:6-7 - Walk not in darkness, but walk in the light as He is in the light
- 2 Cor. 5:7 - "We walk by faith and not by sight"
- Eph 2:10 - "Created for good works before hand that we should walk in them"

- Your **walk** has to do with your **conduct and behavior** in this life. Your **Christian living**
- Opposite of some **teachings of gnosticism** that separated *spirit (good) from body (bad)* therefore *it doesn't matter what you do with your body (my body my choice not very Christian)*
- The person **learning and living God's will** is called to **walk WORTHY of the Lord**.
- **Worthy (axios)** has to do with **scales and weight**. Axios is when the **scales are balanced**. **Talk matches the walk**. **Life lived matches the life been given**. There's a **weight to your walk**.
- We might call *someone who can't handle a certain atmosphere* a **"lightweight"** (spicy food!)
- Our **Christian life has purpose and meaning** and **should have weight to the way it's lived**.
- **We don't make ourselves worthy**. Christ did that, but we now **live out that worthiness**.

V. 10 - **Fully pleasing Him**

- I'm sure **we all have this desire** and aim. But most of us, much of the time, **feel unworthy** and that **our lives aren't pleasing to Him**. *So, how does this work?*
- If I am born again, **I have inherited Christ's worth** and the indwelling of the Spirit. Adopted into God's family. **Positionally, the Father is fully pleased with me in Christ..**
- Just like a father might hear his son or daughter **practice playing the violin or saxophone** and that kid **honks and squeaks** 19 of 20 notes wrong, everyone cringes, but dad says, *"that's my kid!"* But **there's another sort of being pleased** when you see your child has worked very hard at something and is **diligent & obedient** to a sport/area of study and they do well. *You're even more pleased. It brings honor to the family. "Wow, son or daughter, I can tell you really care"*
- That's the point here - **Practically (pragmatically)** I am called to **grow and live for Him**. As I seek Him and study His word, I grow in **grace and knowledge** and **begin to yield to His will**.
- **Ephesians 6:6** - *"...not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart"* - walking worthy of God is sometimes difficult...
- **Christ, while on earth as a bondservant** said, *"The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him."* (John 8:29)

V. 10 - **Being fruitful in every good work**

- One of the ways we **please God** is by **bearing fruit** in this life. *We talked about it last Sunday.*
- **Being fruitful (karpophoreo)** = **bringing forth / producing**. **Fruit is all over the NT**: *Evangelism & Discipleship; Giving & Generosity; Praise & Worship; Righteousness and good works.*
- **Present and active**. **Paul** is praying this would be an **ongoing constant reality** for **Colossae**.
- *Not just any work*, but **"good"** works. (**agathos**) = *intrinsically good. Beneficial/Benevolent.*
- So, we're called to a **walk and work**. A **worthy walk and good work**. (*it pleases God*)
- **Big and small**. **Every good work**. *Preaching? Serving? Helping? Hospitality? Evangelism? Etc.*

V. 10 - **And increasing in the knowledge of God**

- But we know that **any work** for God, *done rightly*, **requires a relationship** with Him. **The more we know God, the more we gain his heart**. The more we **abide in Him**, the more we **bear fruit**.
- **Growing in the knowledge** of God results in **an overflowing of fruit in His will** in our lives.
- **1 Peter 2:2** - *"As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow"*
- **Knowledge (epignosis)** = *full, perfect, precise knowledge*. (*next week = mind blowing!*)
- Our lives are **radically transformed from the inside out**. It's **not some emotionally hyped up enthusiasm**. **Devotion leads to duty**. *Kingdom work & kingdom ethics begin flowing...*

We need God's power and strength to accomplish any of this, which is exactly what Paul prays for...

V. 11 - **Strengthened** with all might according to **His glorious power (Colossal!)**

- **Strengthened (dynamoumenoi)** = empowered by God's might. **Ability, capability**
- **According to** - *Not our strength, but His. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

V. 11 - **For all...**

- For *any and every* situation. *All trials, all the time. Are you going through something right now?*
- **Dominican Republic** - **Juandalee** - *"If I have God's strength, I have everything I need."*
- With **God's mighty strength** in you, you now have **transforming power** inside of you.
- And we **tend to think of God's power in signs and wonders** (*crossing the red sea, crushing walls of Jericho, etc*) - *all true*, but Paul's prayer here is for strength in **Christian character**...

V. 11 - **Patience (endurance / steadfastness)**

- **Hypomone** = Remaining steadfast under pressure (trials and difficulties) without giving up. **To stick it out over the long haul...** (*run a good long race*). Specifically, with **Circumstances**.
- And, don't think of **patience** as *passive knitting on a recliner eating cheese-its*, but instead that of a *pressing on a warrior on a battlefield that keeps going when it's tough*. It's the *marathon runner that keeps going when hitting the wall*.
 - **Hudson Taylor (image)** (1800's) decades in *inland China* - wars, famines, most of his children died, his wife died. Lost donors due to dress. His motto was *"God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supplies."*
 - **Amy Carmichael (image)** (1800's) served *55 years in India* rescuing children from Hindu temple prostitution despite death threats, social outcasting, Chronic illness - bedridden but continued)
 - **James 1:2-3** - *"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience [hypomone]"*

V. 11 - **Longsuffering**

- **Makrothymia** (makros = long + thymos = temper) = **longtempered** (not short fused)
- **Proverbs 16:32, NET** - *"Better to be slow to anger than to be a mighty warrior, and one who controls his temper is better than one who captures a city."*
- Specifically, with **people**. **Forgiving others and refusing revenge or retaliation**.
 - **Corrie Ten Boom (image)** (1900's) - Famous for **"The Hiding Place"** - After surviving *Nazi concentration camps* where her family died for hiding Jews, *in camps shared the love of Christ and need to forgive their captors*. She later returned to Germany to preach forgiveness and reconciliation to former guards and soldiers...)

V. 11 - **with Joy**

- **This is the real trick**. When faced with *challenging situations or difficult people*, our tendency is to get **upset or defensive**. Or to lie in **a gloomy cloud of despair**.
 - But this is *not grin & bear it* kind of strength, but **a joyful surrender**.
 - **Joy (Chara)** - from the **root word for grace/favor** - this is *a grace of God in your life!* (*inner blessedness that the world can't steal*)
 - It's not *something we muster* but it is **Holy Spirit empowered Joy. A Fruit of the Spirit!**
 - **Pray** - *Holy Spirit help me not to endure not begrudgingly, but joyfully!*

V. 12 - **Giving thanks to the Father**

- **Eucharist** = grateful for good graces
- Christians who are **being transformed in their walk** will bear the fruit of joyfulness and **thankfulness**. When we lose joy, *we become critical and ungrateful*. **Lord, help us!**
- **James 1:17** - "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights..." - Even *our very breath is a gift to be thankful for*. (\$10 Million, die tomorrow?)
- **Giving thanks** is a **supernatural overflow** of a transformed life. (*Practice at dinner...*)

How do we walk worthy and please the father? Allowing all these **qualities to transform** our lives.

- Once, a little girl was playing in the yard when she stopped to examine the flowers in her mother's flower garden. She said, "Mom, I know why flowers grow". "Why?", asked the mother. "Because", explained the little girl, "they want to get out of the dirt". That desire to "get out of the dirt" dwells in the heart of every child of God. We want to live better because we know Him!
- **Christ is our example in all these**. (grace, joy, strength, patience, endurance, thanksgiving)
- Our **batteries run out**, but **God's power source** is un-ending and transformative.

Is your life bearing visible fruit? Pray and ask...

Liberation (verses 12b-14)

With **our minds sharpened** and our **hearts strengthened in thankfulness**, we **appreciate and live out our freedom** all the more! Here are *all the reasons* we have to **be joyful and thankful**.

V. 12 - Who has **qualified us**

- **Qualified (hikanoo)** = to **make adequate**. **To render worthy!**
 - **Aorist tense** = *completed action*. (*Anyone thankful...?*)
 - That *moment in the past* when *God completed our sufficiency* (**the cross!**)

V. 12 - To be **partakers of the inheritance**

- This is **what we have been declared worthy of** by **the Father**. To **our share of glory**.
- **In the OT**, God's people were given an **earthly inheritance, the land of Canaan**. Each tribe received its **portion/lot**. **In the NT**, we have received **every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies**.
- **Eph 1:13-14** - "In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is **the guarantee of our inheritance** until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory." (*Anyone thankful...?*)
- "Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise, **Thou mine Inheritance, now and always**." (Be Thou My Vision)

V. 12 - Of the **saints in the light**

- **Amazing language! Holy ones (Hagios) in the light (phos)! Called out and set apart!**
- **Matthew 5:14** - "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden."
 - (*Anyone thankful...?*)

***A man's greatest problem is **bondage to sin** and **separation from God**. **But good news...**

V. 13 - He has **delivered us**

- **Delivered/Rescued (rhuomai)** = to snatch away from danger. Pulled from a burning building
- Like a soldier going to a wounded comrade on the battlefield and snatching him to safety.
- We've been pulled out of the miry clay and been set upon a rock!
 - (Anyone thankful...?)

***We've been delivered from something very specific...

V. 13 - From the **power of darkness** - **Be bold with conviction.**

- These are sinister forces in a spiritual realm. The battle going on in our world. (people are flooding to churches because of this right here! - Charlie Kirk incident)
 - **From (Ek)** = out of | **Power (Exousia)** = domain/kingdom - This is WHY it matters
 - (Anyone thankful...?) - This is the Passover Exodus story - I have redeemed you!
- We no longer walk in darkness, but now we walk in light as He is in the light.

***But Christ did not bring us out just to have us wander aimlessly with no home...

V. 13 - And **conveyed us**

- **Brought out and Brought in!**
- **Conveyed (methistemi)** = to transfer - To live in a new realm. New nature. New citizenship!

V. 13 - Into the **kingdom of the Son of His love** (**Baptism and Mt of Transfiguration**) - **Great price**

- No longer the kingdom of darkness. But now the kingdom of the beloved son.
- **Ancient world context** - empires would transfer citizens of conquered land to new kingdoms (Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome). This language is here used of us from Satan to the Son.
- **Who we are and everything we have** now belongs to the Kingdom of Christ. Complete change of allegiance & identity. **Aorist tense** = completed action. (Anyone thankful...?)

V. 14 - In whom **we have redemption**

- **In Whom?** = **In Christ** - He is our great substitute. The Lamb of God. Present tense.
- **We have Redemption (apolutrosis)** = liberation procured by the payment of a ransom
 - It is finished = paid in full (through His blood) - Holy Justice satisfied. With spot.
 - The language of redemption is the language of freedom! Ga'al (kinsman redeemer)
 - (Anyone thankful...?)

***Redemption and forgiveness go together...

V. 14 - The **forgiveness of sins** - **Sin was once our master...**

- We've all sinned and fallen short. The wages of sin is death. But the gift of God!
- **Forgiveness (aphesis)** = to remove, send away, or cancel. - Our debt is canceled!
 - Yom Kippur = Scapegoat. Also, Jubilee (50 years) (Anyone thankful...?)
- "The voice of sin is loud, but the voice of forgiveness is louder." (DL Moody)

Are you living as one liberated from darkness? **Pray and Ask...**

Closing

Jesus is the answer to everything. Pain, struggle, joy, hope, direction, strength, freedom (**preach**)

Paul's Prayers:

- *Filled with knowledge of God's will and all understanding and wisdom (**cultivation/education**)*
- *Walk worthy of God with strength, endurance, patience, joy and thanksgiving (**transformation**)*
- *Enjoy being qualified partakers, delivered, conveyed, redeemed and forgiven (**liberation**)*

Invitation: If not yet liberated, receive Christ's forgiveness today. After service, pray...

PRAY