

EXPERIENCING GOD'S WILL

Colossians 1:9-14

As Kevin taught last week, a group of people in Colossae had believed the gospel, but there was **A PROBLEM** that many scholars call the **COLOSSIAN ERROR**.

In the Phrygian region where Colossae was located, there were numerous, **DIVERGENT INFLUENCES**, and the Colossian believers were beginning to **MIX THOSE INFLUENCES WITH CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE**.

So, Paul wrote a letter. They needed to know that **ADDING WORLDLY THINKING** to their relationship with God **ACTUALLY SUBTRACTED FROM IT**.

JESUS ALONE IS ENOUGH.

As you read these words, **PAY ATTENTION TO THE BACK-AND-FORTH** between what we do and what God does or has done.

To borrow Kenneth Boa's words from his book, Conformed to His Image, "**see the interrelationship of the human and the divine in the outworking of the Christian life.**"

Colossians 1:9-14

9 And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. 11 May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. 13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Verse 9 - when WE are “filled” with the knowledge of HIS will...

Verse 10 - WE will live life worthily of the Lord, desiring to please HIM, bearing fruit, and increasing in knowledge of HIM.

Verse 11 - HE strengthens US according to HIS might, so that WE attain to all endurance and patience in joy...

Verse 12 - WE give thanks (recognition) to the Father because HE qualified US to have an inheritance with the saints, and...

Verse 13 - **HE** rescued **US** from the domain of darkness, AND transferred us to the kingdom of His Son,

Verse 14 - in **HIM WE** have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Back and forth it goes, what He has done or promises to do, and what we do in order to remain in step with Him.

So often, however, we get caught with what **WE DO IN THIS WORLD**, or what **WE DO FOR HIM**, what we're **SUPPOSED TO DO**, and **we lose sight of how the Lord works in us to enable us to live this life.**

Paul is the Colossians (AND US!) that if they will only grasp how the Lord is working in and alongside them, they will successfully walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

It's that **UNION**, that **PARTNERSHIP** that I want to explore this morning with you.

Jesus is **MORE** than an **INTELLECTUAL PURSUIT** or a weekend **VIP**.

He is **WITH YOU** and **FOR YOU**.

He is a **FRIEND**.

WITH THAT IN MIND, **let's grow**.

Colossians 1:9

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

Heard WHAT? That a group of people in Colossae had believed the gospel of Jesus Christ, and that they were bearing fruit and growing.

How did they pray?

"...that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will..."

"Filled" means *to fill to the full*.



What's a sure way to know if a container can't hold any more of something? It **OVERFLOWS!**

That's how **COMPLETELY** we are to be filled!

What are we to be filled with? The **KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WILL** as opposed to **our will** or the **knowledge of the world** telling you how valuable you are or who you are supposed to be!

How do we get filled with the **KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WILL?** By getting in **HIS WORD** and letting His Spirit teach us!

GOD'S WORD CHANGES LIVES! That's the whole story in verses 9 and 10.

We can't know God and His will apart from it!

Without the Word, **MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD WITHERS OR MORPHS** into something of my own invention.

God wants to **PERMEATE YOUR LIFE** so thoroughly that there's no room for anything else to come in and **INFLUENCE YOUR LIFE.**

"...in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,"

WISDOM is gathered through LIFE EXPERIENCE. Wisdom EQUALS life experience.

And *"understanding"* has to do with considering Him in before acting. There's a **FLOW**. You're attempting to be **SPIRITUALLY WITH IT** enough to follow Him in the moment! Like...



Like walking through the snow, stepping in the footprints of the person ahead of you...

Just as you would be looking for the next footprint to step in, we live looking to the next opportunity to obey God.

Not a worrisome obedience, but a **NATURAL OBEDIENCE** (the **FLOW** of "*understanding*")

We experience the will of God **THROUGH OBEDIENCE**, and we know Him and His Will through His Word.

Again, **GOD'S WORD CHANGES LIVES**. That's what verse 10 is talking about.

Colossians 1:10

so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

The IVP NT Bible Background Commentary:

"Jewish teachers described their moral laws derived from the Old Testament law as *halakah*, which literally means 'walking.' Although this expression was not common in Greek, Paul's readers (especially those becoming more acquainted with the Old Testament and Judaism) would understand his point."

Such a walk, the scripture says, is "**fully pleasing to him.**"

From the NET Bible on "**fully pleasing to him...**"

BDAG 129 s.v. ἀρεσκεία states that ἀρεσκείαν ("ar-es'-ki-ah") refers to a "**DESIRE to please** εἰς πᾶσαν ἄ. to please (the Lord) in all respects

This element is key! If we *want to please* God, we'll look to Him on how to do things in a **NEW WAY!**

That's bearing fruit! It's **NOTICIBLE GROWTH** or growth that produces as **EFFECT**.

It's like the pepper plants it planted in my garden this past summer. They were green and beautiful all summer long...and that was it.

FINALLY, I saw them: little white blossoms. LOTS of them! In no time, there were bright, sweet, orange snacking peppers all over the plant. The plant had grown to the point that it produced an **EFFECT**: peppers, something to eat!

How is your walk with Jesus causing a **NOTICIBLE CHANGE** in your life?

Do you have **MORE CONTROL** over your **TEMPER** and your **TONGUE**?

Do you find yourself bitterly **DWELLING ON BEING WRONGED** by others, or are you learning to let go and **FORGIVE**?

Are you becoming **MORE SENSITIVE** to the things that cause you to have **SINFUL THOUGHTS** and behaviors, **AVOIDING** them? Or do you indulge in them regardless of their effect?

Are you **ENVIIOUS** of others, or **CAN YOU REJOICE FOR THEM** when they experience blessing?

In what ways are you **NOTICIBLY CHANGING?** If you see such growth, you're **BEARING FRUIT!**

As a result of such an outworking of God's will in your life, you will experience *increasing in the knowledge of God.*

NOTE the difference here.

In VERSE 9 Paul prayed that the Colossian believers would be filled with **the knowledge of His will,**

And VERSE 10 tells us that the effect of that is growing in our knowledge **OF HIM!**

See, now **THE RELATIONSHIP BEGINS TO DEEPEN.**

I love how Peter words it in the last words he would pen in the scriptures...

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 to the day of eternity. Amen.

Tell me, how do you **GROW AS A FRIEND** of someone?

Is it not **THROUGH...**

- 1) Shared **LIFE EXPERIENCE**, and
- 2) **INTRINSIC KNOWLEDGE** of that person

You know things about each other, and you do things together.

That's what I hear when I read Peter's words.

We grow in grace through experience, and that by way of **living out His will, by being like Him.**

Through His Word, we get to know Him—what pleases Him, what breaks His heart, what's important to Him, and how He sees me.

When we grow in this way, God goes from **distant to approachable**, from **SUNDAY MORNING ACQUAINTANCE** to **EVER-PRESENT FRIEND**.

Colossians 1:11

May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy,

We have access to ALL POWER because the One on Whom we rely has all the power.

Echoes of **2 Peter 1:3...**

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,

We literally have **EVERYTHING WE NEED** to live a life that's pleasing to Him.

And notice again how we **ACCESS** it through the **KNOWLEDGE OF HIM**.

Remember, this series is about discerning what's **TRUE** and what's **FALSE** in a world where everyone and everything claims, **"THIS** is the right way! **THIS** will make your life **WHOLE!**"

Paul tells us like he tells the Colossian believers, **JESUS ALONE** is all we need to live victoriously in Him.

Colossians 1:11

May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy,

Jesus supplies the strength we need to **ENDURE TO THE END**, to **PATIENTLY WAIT ON HIM**, and to know **LASTING JOY**.

Colossians 1:12

giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

Do you know what the most quoted words BY GOD in the Bible are?

Psalms 136:1

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.

There's nothing the Lord says more.

Thanksgiving is a **SIGN** of a **SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE**. Paul describes this **ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE** in several of his letters.

When we express thanksgiving, we **RECOGNIZE** the presence of **SOMETHING THAT WASN'T THERE BEFORE** and **THE ONE WHO BROUGHT IT**.

When we thank God for things, we **RECOGNIZE WHAT HE'S DONE!** Otherwise, we forget, and everything He's done becomes a little **LESS REAL**.

When we aren't **INTENTIONALLY THANKFUL BLESSINGS GO UNNOTICED**, as if we never received them.

Are you in the habit of seeing God as He works in your life? If you intentionally give thanks, you will be.

OR DO YOU MISS HIM LIKE THE SERVER who refills your glass when you go out to eat? Sadly, my observation is that people **ONLY NOTICE WHEN THE SERVER DOESN'T SHOW UP**, and that observation holds fairly true no matter whether the one being waited on is a believer or not.

We're sitting there at the table shaking a cup of just ice or SSSSSLUUUUUUUURPPIIIIIIIINNG drops through a straw as loudly as possible.

If the server shows up to fill your glass while you're in the middle of a conversation, do you stop and thank them immediately, or do you ignore them, or miss them altogether? I mean, they brought what was needed, right? Or were they only doing what they should have done?

You see, **GOD NEVER STOPS GIVING** us what we need! The problem is that we've been so **PROGRAMMED** by this world system, we don't easily distinguish between what we need and want!

The world tells us that as long as we have stuff and we're healthy, and everyone we love is healthy, we're good. However, **THE MOST VALUABLE THINGS HE GIVES ARE INTANGIBLE.**

We thank Him for the promotion.

We thank Him letting the meeting go smoothly.
We thank Him for our food.

We thank Him for our families, and for our health. It's great that we thank Him for these things, but He's given so much more!

Do we thank Him **FOR HOW HE'S GROWING US** as believers? That's not you; it's Him.

Do we thank Him **FOR TEACHING US** when we get alone and study the Bible?

Do we thank Him when we realize that **A SPECIFIC** we've struggled with for a long time **HAS LESS OF A GRIP** on us?

When temptation is strong, **DO WE SEE THE ESCAPE HATCH** He's promised to provide (1 Corinthians 10:13), **thank Him for it**, and dive through it?

If all you added to your life from today's message is to **CULTIVATE AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE**, it would change your life...

Because the same thing that causes us to not walk worthily of the Lord is what also causes us to be deficient in our thanksgiving: we don't recognize He's given us everything we need to walk this walk (2 Peter 1:3).

If we did recognize it and take advantage of it, our prayers would look less like...

"Thank you for this food..."

"Please help me have a good day today..."

"Thank you for letting me have a good day..."

Our prayers would have less to do with what pleases us on a fleshly level.

INSTEAD, THEY WOULD BE MORE LIKE...

"Father, when I encounter difficult people today, would You help me see them as You see them? Would you give me divine insight to know how I can help them?"

"Father, I'm tempted to sin by you name it. When those thoughts rise up in me, would you remind me that You RESCUED ME FROM THAT DARKNESS? Help me remember that I'm strengthened not according to my might—how much sleep I've had, or how much coffee I've drank—BUT ACCORDING TO YOUR GLORIOUS MIGHT!"

"Father, I'm struggling right now, and I don't even know how to tell You what I'm thinking and feeling. Would you help me remember that You're with me, and that You've given me everything I need to live for you? Would you help me remember that You're pleased with me, and that You love me no matter what?"

"Father, help me make you smile today."

"I LOVE YOU TOO! Thank You for loving me!"

Colossians 1:12 says...

giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

He has made us qualified.

2 Corinthians 3:4-5

4 Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God,

Do you ever feel like you're not enough? The world will tell you that you're not enough without *fill in the blank*, or because of *blank*.

God says, "You're mine. You're enough. I made you enough."

WHAT'S MORE, He's made us sufficient to share in the inheritance of the saints. What is that? **Romans 8:17** says that we are **HEIRS OF GOD** and **FELLOW HEIRS WITH CHRIST!**

What does Jesus get? **EVERYTHING!!!**

It's the picture of **A GOD WHO'S PULL OUT ALL THE STOPS to GET TO YOU,**

and Who **TAKES CARE OF YOU LIKE A PERFECT FATHER WOULD.**

Colossians 1:13-14

13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

We have a **NEW POSITION!** We're no longer a subject of the domain of darkness. We are **CITIZENS OF THE KINGDOM** of God!

We're different!

We're no longer prodded along by that which goads the world.

We're no longer to live in uncertainty and fear!

We're no longer slaves to sin (redemption, we've been bought back)!

HE RESCUED US from the domain of darkness, **AND GAVE US A PLACE** in **THE KINGDOM OF HIS SON!!!**

We weren't just a bunch of wretches He happened to notice, have pity on, and pulled out of a bad place.

He loved us from across eternity! He rescued us from our wicked taskmasters who continually lead us to sin, but He didn't stop there!

He didn't just cut us loose from our ugly background and say, "Now over there's a place for you. Stay over there." **NO!** He rescued us, and then **HE BROUGHT US IN CLOSE.**

He saved us so we would be **WITH HIM!**

And you can **TAKE HOLD OF LIFE** with Him now!

It's about **JOINING GOD IN HIS REDEMPTIVE WORK** in your life. If knowing all that God had done for them wasn't vitally connected to how they could and should have been living, the

Lord through Paul wouldn't have driven that home to the Colossians. **BUT IT IS VITALLY CONNECTED!**

WRAPPING UP...

See the human and divine **INTERRELATIONSHIP!**

This is a walk with God!

IT'S PURSUING HIM IN HIS WORD,

STEPPING IN OBEDIENCE,

and **STEPPING IN RESPONSE** of all God has done and continues to do in you!

Do you live with a **desire to please Him in every area?**

Does the desire to please **DOMINATE** your decision making?

Do you live **like you're strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy?**

Is **HIS POWER** what you **RELY ON**? Or is it a worldly **SUBSTITUTE** like stuff, relationships, and entertainment?

Do you live with the in-your-face, front-of-your-mind **REALITY OF ALL HE'S DONE, RECOGNIZING IT BY GIVING HIM THANKS?**

Do you live like you're **ENOUGH IN HIM?** Like you have **PURPOSE** and **EVERLASTING VALUE?**

Do you live like someone **SET FREE** from the domain of darkness? Like your **PAST SINS ARE GONE?!**

Do you live like **CITIZENS MADE WORTHY** to be part **OF HIS SON'S KINGDOM?**

Do you?! Wanna start?

Get in His Word. Ask His Spirit to teach you. Trust Him, and obey Him, and you'll be joining Him on His walk through your life.