DIVING DEEPER DISCUSSION GUIDE

TEXT SUMMARY

Our Advent series is built around three key aspects of Christ's coming:

- His Advent in the past
- His Advent in the present
- His Advent in the future

In this week's text, Colossians 1:3-13; 21-23, we see Paul lay out the present work of Christ in the life of the believer: our sanctification (the Spirit shaping the trajectory of our lives toward holiness and Christ-likeness).

INTRODUCTION (OBSERVATION):

Paul's prayers are a rich source of insight into the process of sanctification. His "prayer list" for the believers in Colossae has several descriptive phrases that describe where God wants to take us. What are some of those phrases? (There are several in v. 9-12, beginning with "filled with the knowledge of His will," v. 9. Find at least three more.)

- 1. "filled with the knowledge of His will" (v. 9)
- 2. _____ 3. _____
- 4.

DISCUSSION (INTERPRETATION):

- 1. Verse 10 begins with a connector indicating purpose: "so that." The Spirit wants to fill us with the knowledge of His will so that we can
- 2. Verse 10 goes on to describe what walking "in a manner worthy of the Lord" looks like. What is involved in the settled life patterns of someone who is walking worthy of the Lord?

SO WHAT? (APPLICATION):

- 1. When you look at Paul's prayer requests for his readers (v. 9-12), what effect does that list have on you?
 - **Intimidating**: I could never measure up to that list of qualities.
 - **Stirring**: That's exactly where I want to go in my spiritual life.
 - **Confusing**: I don't fully understand what all this means.
 - Something else: _
- In his sermon Joe quoted the Westminster Shorter Catechism, which describes the process of sanctification this way: "Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness" (Q&A 34).
 - We might think of sanctification as something we are supposed to **do**. After all, we don't just float into Christ-likeness; there's discipline and self-denial involved. But the definition above speaks of our sanctification as "the work of God's free grace." If your sanctification is the work of the Spirit, what role do you play in it?
 - The phrase "**renews in the whole man**" indicates that the Spirit's purposes are wideranging, not limited to any specific arena of our life (our personality, our thought life, our spiritual life, our physical life, etc.) In what part of your life does the Spirit need to do the most work to bend the trajectory toward holiness and Christ-likeness?
 - What does it mean to "**die to sin**" in your life? Was there ever a time when you had to "die" to a particular besetting sin in your life? How did God bring you to the place where you were willing to see that sin die in you?

