

Colossians 1:9-14
January 14, 2024

Our scripture for today comes from...

[READ Scripture: Colossians 1:9-14]

[PRAYER]

Colossians 1:3-8

3 We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; 5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel 6 which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth; 7 just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf, 8 and he also informed us of your love in the Spirit.

- Here God is reminding us the natural progression of the Gospel
- 1. It naturally bears fruit. That's what the Gospel does. It does not return void.
 - The proclamation that Jesus is Lord goes out into the world
 - and it changes hearts.
 - It changes families
 - It changes cities
 - It changes nations.
 - The gospel tells us that Jesus has purchased us with his precious blood
 - And now offers us new life, eternal life in His Kingdom.

Isaiah 55:11

11 So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

- Paul has an optimistic attitude about the future.
- We, as we follow Paul, like he follows Christ, should have an optimistic attitude as well towards the future.
 - The gospel of the Kingdom always goes forward through death and resurrection. And while there may be seasons of great persecution and regression, and seeming defeat from our standpoint this is but the way of God's Kingdom.
 - His Kingdom is not of this world...so we must not expect it to take ground in the way that kingdoms of this earth go forth.

- **But an Optimistic hope in the faithfulness of King Jesus, regardless of our circumstances, is what is modeled for us by the historic church.**
 - **This is particularly important as we seek to be a people committed to generational faithfulness.**
 - For the sake of our children. We have to give our children a mission to live for.
 - I recently heard a Pastor yelling at his congregation, “**we don’t win down here.**” That is an absolute tragedy.
 - I, individually, might not win according to my own expectations or the expectations of a particular worldview, but Jesus promised that the gates of Hell will not prevail against “WE” - the church of Jesus Christ.
 - Kids are taking their lives for lack of something to live for.
 - Fathers and Mothers are abandoning their families for lack of seeing the vital, epic mission that awaits them every morning as they step out of bed.
 - The most precious of God’s creation are giving the bodies to profane and worthless acts seeking purpose, meanings and value.
 - Many hit the eject button because they are looking right past the epic adventure that Christ has freely offered through His blood offered to every single person!
- **This is Paul’s heart as he starts out this letter.**
- Paul here is setting the stage for the encouragement that is about to come for them to keep walking out of their faith.
 - They have put on Christ through faith and now he is going to encourage them to continue growing in the likeness of Christ.
- He isn’t going to call them to just any faith...but a faith that has produced Love, not from themselves but from Spirit.
- **The point of our salvation is to bring us into right relationship with God through Christ’s righteousness, and to continually put on that righteousness that is ours through God’s mercy and grace in Christ Jesus.**

Colossians 1:9

9 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

- Paul starts out by saying, it is for this reason...because of their faith that is producing love from the Spirit...that they have not stopped praying for them.
 - Paul's heart and desire is for them to grow in the stature and measure of Christ Jesus.
 - **Example:** Prayer for my own kids, and fro the students I'm teaching at Valor, that they would grow, just like Christ did, in wisdom and stature and favor with both God and man.
 - This is our heart as Pastoral team, that we would grow as a church to me know for our Love in the Spirit.
 - That the love of Christ would be made manifest in all our relationships.
 - **This is discipleship!**

- This exhortation is also good reminder of the importance of faithful, quiet, consistent prayer on behalf of others.
 - **Prayer primarily does two things:**
 - 1. The most important thing that prayer does in our lives is it brings our hearts into alignment with God's heart. And when our hearts are inline with God's heart it produces the Love of God in us.
 - 2. It is spiritual encouragement for others.
 - Never underestimate the power of interceding for others.
 - Prayer doesn't need to be grand or ostentatious. I've been to many prayer gatherings, and the grander they are the less impactful they seem to me.
 - Focusing on the experience, rather than faithful communion with God
 - **Example: Tuesday morning staff prayer. Tuesday night prayer.**

James 5:16

16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

- We need one another, we need community, we need to come alongside one another through prayer.

- **What is it that they were hoping that their prayers would accomplish?**

- **...that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,...**

- That they would have a full and wise understanding of God's will for their lives.

- This is very same thing that Jesus taught His disciples to prayer for when they pray:
 - Your Kingdom come, your will be done.
 - On earth as it is in heaven.
- **God hasn't left us guessing as to what His will is for our lives.**

John 6:40

40 "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

Romans 12:2

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will[G2307] of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

1 Thessalonians 4:2-3a

2 For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. 3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification;...

God's will is that all people would find eternal life in Christ, and grow in their Christ-likeness through participation in the Body of Christ.

- **If you have ever wondered what God's general will for your life is...**
 - It is to first accept Jesus as Savior and Lord. And participate fully in bringing his Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.
 - And the Kingdom comes to our hearts first.

...that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

Colossians 1:10

10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

- Always look for the SO THAT!
- **This is Paul's heart for the Colossian church and it is our heart for this church.**
- **As Philippians 3:10 says...**
 - **... that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;**
- **That we would live our lives in a manner worthy of the Lord,**

- What a high calling!
- Paul is calling them up...
- We need to call each other up...to the highest of callings.
- We have grace for our failings, and because of this we have freedom to not lower our standards or make excuses.
- **This isn't condemnation or judgment. It is a loving father calling us up to what is the very best for our lives.**

- **Example: Westin's Basketball Coach.**

- **God has called us to join His Spirit on the extraordinary mission to share Jesus with the world and then teach them to obey Christ.**

- **Our mission as a church: Sharing Jesus and Leading others to follow him.**
 - After we receive the gospel, Share the gospel, and grow into the likeness of Christ.

- **Bearing fruit and increasing in knowledge...**
 - These go hand in hand.
 - This isn't an esoteric knowledge that never translates into our everyday lives.
 - It is actually in the way that the knowledge of the Lord translates into our everyday lives, that is our primary mode of sharing the gospel.
 - It isn't a faith that comes as an add-on to our life, but a faith that radically transforms our lives into faithful obedience to Christ in all of life.
 - This is the beautiful picture we get in Baptism.
 - Fully immersed in the life of Christ.

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Now that Paul has set forth Christ's high calling on our lives he is going to give us some practical wisdom on HOW to do this:

Colossians 1:11-12

11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

- The strength that we need doesn't come through our own **strength, intellect, or resources**.
 - It all comes from the Power of God. and his glorious might.
 - Getting to the end of ourselves we finally figure out that is where God wants us to be.

- **For the attaining of Steadfastness and patience**
 - Faithful little obediences

- **Ezra 3-5:** Zechariah's encouragement to Zerubbabel. As they looked at the task of rebuilding Jerusalem, and their enemies mocked their efforts.
 - "Do not despise the day of small things."
 - God rarely uses the grand, and spectacular, to do his best work.
 - Never underestimate the power of patient endurance.
 - Jesus' Kingdom doesn't move forward like the Kingdom's of this world. It is quiet, and subversive, and longsuffering, and patient.
 - Your job isn't to leave your mark on this world, or to build your platform, it is to leave Christ's mark on this world.
- **Joyously giving thanks to God**
 - Gratitude for everything.
 - Resting in the sovereignty of God,
 - God you have this.
 - I see so much fear, so much worry, so much anxiety.
 - But it all points to our lack of trust in God's faithfulness.
- **Our qualification is from Christ alone.**
 - Rest in the finished work of Christ.
 - Some of you are stuck, because you keep thinking that you have to get all your crap together, before you can be qualified.
 - We try to qualify ourselves...
 - Jesus is the one who qualifies and makes you worthy of your calling.
- **From this place we become the Light of Christ to the world.**
 - **Sermon on the mount.** You are the light of the world.
 - We are to be a peculiar people, not out of the world, but in the midst of the world.
 - Walking in obedience to Christ, loving God and loving others.
 - We are Christ-actualized, and Self-actualized.

Colossians 1:13-14

13 For He rescued 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.

- Out of darkness...the darkness of the world and what it is selling.
- It is all darkness...
 - **Human wisdom is at its best still only leads to death.**
- Jesus has redeemed us from this present darkness...so get out of it.
 - There is only one name by which we can be saved.
 - And that is King Jesus.
 - Jesus is Lord, he is the way the truth and the life.
- So enter into His Kingdom. The Kingdom of light and life.

- Through the precious blood of Christ.
- And for those who have entered into His Kingdom of Light, he wants to make you a light.
 - That starts in your heart.
 - Your responsibilities, spouse, kids, work, all for the glory of God.

- **This is the will of God for your life in Christ Jesus.**
 - So that you might walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, pleasing Him in all respects...