

Introduction

Last week we were introduced to Paul's letter to the Colossians. We saw that it was written by Paul and Timothy to the saints and faithful brethren in Colossae. Some people say that this was Paul's most insignificant letter, because the town of Colossae was very small. My take is that God is not always about numbers. There are two letters in the New Testament written to the church at Colossae: Colossians and Philemon. The people in that church were obviously important to God, the content of the letters was important to our church fathers who included it in the canon, and it is still important for us today. It is a wonderful book and I am excited about our study of it.

The letter was to be shared with the Laodiceans, and they were to share a letter going to them with the church in Colossae. There were several home churches in Laodicea and Colossae. When Paul mentions the brethren in Laodicea, he also mentions Nympha and the church in her house. He also tells Archippus to take heed of the ministry he received in the Lord. In Paul's letter to Philemon, he specifically writes to Archippus, and the church in his house. Therefore, we know of at least two churches that were meeting in homes.

(Col 4:15-17) Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea and also Nympha and the church that is in her house. {16} When this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter that is coming from Laodicea. {17} Say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."

(Philemon 1:1-2) Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our beloved brother and fellow worker, {2} and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:

Jesus cared enough for the lost sheep that He left the ninety-nine to go and find the one sheep. Even though He loves the whole world, He searches after the one that is lost. Even though the church in Jerusalem may have grown to forty or fifty thousand, God cares enough about these two home churches that He had Paul write several letters to them. God cares about little churches, just like he cares about large churches. You are not insignificant to God. Our small congregation is not insignificant to God. He loves us, and cares about us. What a wonderful Lord we serve.

I want to mention a few other things as we get started. First, Paul identifies himself as an apostle in this letter. He did not use this in his greeting to the Philippians. Some commentators say that Timothy is not included as an apostle in this greeting, since he is not one. Well, in 1 Thessalonians we find that Timothy is mentioned as an apostle. Paul was a spiritual father to Timothy, in that he was mentoring or discipling him in apostolic ministry. Both men are apostles (1 Thess 1:1, 2:6). An apostle is a spiritual father.

The work of apostles is to establish churches. Paul did not plant the church in Colossae. Epaphras shared the gospel in Colossae, and probably planted the church. He probably turned the church over to Archippus, who is now leading the church. The church was probably started while Paul was in Ephesus, and that is probably where Paul and Epaphras became acquainted. Part of establishing churches is to lay foundations. Ephesians 2:20 tells us that the foundations are laid by the apostles and prophets. The letters that Paul wrote to the churches were foundational letters.

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One of the reasons that we have gone through part of Ephesians, Philippians, 1 Timothy, and part of 1 Corinthians is we have been laying foundations in this church. Paul's letter to the Colossians is another foundational letter. The men are going through Romans, which is another great foundational book. We will be shifting and going through the gospel of Luke this fall and next year.

Apostles also set churches in order. In Acts 14:23, Paul and Barnabas went about ordaining pastors in all the churches. In Titus 1:5, Paul tells Titus to set in order the churches on the island of Crete by ordaining pastors in all the churches. Training and raising up leadership, and then releasing them into their call is just part of apostolic work.

(Acts 14:23) When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

(Titus 1:5) For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you,

Apostles also bring resolution to problems in churches. In particular, they help resolve doctrinal problems. When the various false doctrines were coming against the church, it was Paul who wrote letters like this to straighten out the problem. When Paul wrote the first letter to Timothy, who was at Ephesus, he tells him to stop certain men from teaching false doctrine.

Apostles also strengthen and encourage churches. We find in Acts 15:41 and Acts 16:5 that Paul and Barnabas went about strengthening the churches. When I moved to Tijeras, we went to another church for a number of years. I approached the leadership and asked them, "what is your greatest need?" They said they did not have a men's ministry. Therefore, I started a men's ministry for them. I was willing to take on whatever area needed strengthening.

(Acts 15:41) And he was traveling through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

(Acts 16:4-5) Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the decrees which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe. {5} So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily.

In Romans 1:11, Paul wrote that he wanted to come there so he could impart a spiritual gift to them. In Paul's letters to Timothy, he encourages Timothy not to neglect, but to fan into flames the gift that was bestowed upon him through Paul laying his hands on him.

(Rom 1:11) For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established;

(1 Tim 4:14) Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.

(2 Tim 1:6) For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

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And, in one of my favorite passages, apostles equip the saints for the work of ministry. Apostles are more interested in equipping the saints than doing all the work. Their heart is to equip people, help them find their place in the body, and release them into those areas of ministry. They want every joint to supply. They know that the body is built up when every joint is supplying.

(Eph 4:11-12) And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, {12} for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

We find Paul praying for all the churches that he writes. Paul covers these churches in prayer. He cares about the churches. He is concerned about the churches. And, he is constantly praying and interceding for them. That is the heart of a spiritual father. He is concerned about the welfare of his children. He wants to see his children walking in truth.

Paul complimented the Colossians by addressing them as saints and faithful brethren. All of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. But, God views His children as saints, or holy ones. Paul makes it clear in 2 Corinthians that we are no longer to recognize anyone according to the flesh. Paul practices what he preaches; he call them saints. Second, he calls them faithful brethren. In our church, I have not harped on money. Rather, I have encouraged all of you to be faithful. When people are faithful, they will be faithful with little things. When people are faithful, they will be faithful with what belongs to others. Finally, when people are faithful, they will be faithful with unrighteous mammon. Luke tells us that when we are faithful with little, God will entrust us with much. When we are faithful with unrighteous mammon, He will entrust us with true treasures. God has brought many faithful people into this congregation. I am very thankful to be a part of this body of faithful brethren.

(Col 1:2) To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

1. Paul prays with thanksgiving for the Colossians.

This morning we are going to continue looking at Paul's prayer for the Colossians. Last week, he began by telling the Colossians how thankful he is of them. You will notice in many of Paul's letters that he begins with thanksgiving. I know that I have mentioned this before, but I want us to really grab hold of this truth. When we go to the Father in prayer, we should begin with thanksgiving and praise. When we pray privately, we should spend time in praise and thanksgiving. When we pray corporately, we should spend time in praise and thanksgiving. We enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. We are to bless his name.

(Col 1:3-4) 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...

(Psalm 100:4) Enter His gates with thanksgiving And His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name.

When Karen and I begin our prayer time each morning, we begin with thanksgiving and praise. There

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are lots of different ways to do this. I used to pray alphabetically. I would go through the names of God, beginning with A. You are the Almighty one. You are the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. You are our Atonement. You are Adonay, Sovereign Lord and Master. I would continue working through the alphabet praising His names.

That is just one way of blessing His name. Lately, we have been praying thematically. I usually begin our prayer times and get them kicked off. Karen easily picks up on the morning theme and joins in. If the theme that morning is God's love, we will thank Him for loving us unconditionally. We will thank Him for loving us while we were yet sinners. We will thank Him for demonstrating His love to us. We will thank Him for laying His life down for His friends. We will acknowledge that there is no greater love than what He did on the cross for us. We will thank Him for enabling us to love. We love because He first loved us. We will thank Him for lavishing His love on us. We will bless him because He is love. We will thank Him for demonstrating the character of love. We thank Him for being kind to us. We thank Him for being patient with us. We thank Him for being gentle with us. We thank Him for not being provoked and for not taking into account a wrong suffered. Those are just some of the characteristics of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

We are blessing and praising God for a particular characteristic or name of His. The main point is that we should always enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Even if we have limited time to pray, we need to spend a good portion of it on blessing and praising His name. As I prayed about this message, there were a couple of things that I sensed the Lord wanted me to share with you out of this passage. One of those is how important we are to Him, even though we are small. He wanted each of you to know how important each of you is to Him. Second, I felt a strong sense to encourage us to spend more time in thanksgiving and praise, and to give you some personal examples of what this looks like. I believe that the Lord wants us to deepen our relationship with Him in this area.

Paul specifically mentions three things that he is thankful about. First, **Paul was thankful for their faith in Christ Jesus**. Karen and I have been faithfully praying for the salvation of some people for many years. We will be very thankful when we hear of their faith in Christ Jesus.

(Col 1:3-4) 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...

Second, **Paul was thankful about the love they have for all the saints**. I can think of no greater compliment than this. Our vision is to be a church that loves God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength; and to love our neighbor as ourselves. That is who we are and that is what we want to be known for. We want all the gifts. We want healings. We want miracles. We want knowledge. We want prophecy and tongues; but love surpasses all of these. We want to be known for our love.

(Col 1:4) ... and the love which you have for all the saints;

Jesus said, by this all men will know that you are My disciples, by your love. When the East Mountain community begins to discover the depth of love that we have for each other, and for them, evangelism will be easy. We must increase in our love of the Lord and for one another. That is who God has called us to be – a church that passionately loves God and fervently loves one another.

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(John 13:34-35) "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. {35} "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Third, **Paul gave thanks to the Father for the hope laid up in heaven for them.** We serve a God of hope. Paul goes on to tell them that they had heard that hope in the word of truth, the gospel. The gospel was good news. The gospel gives hope to the sick. The gospel gives hope to the downcast and discouraged. The gospel gives hope to the poor. The gospel gives hope to all the afflicted. The gospel gives hope to all of us. Whatever situation you find yourself in, there is hope in the gospel for you this morning.

(Col 1:5) because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel

Paul tells them that this gospel that gives hope bears fruit in our lives. I like to grow fruit trees and grapes, and berries. Unfortunately, I have had to lay down my gardening in order to carry out all my current responsibilities. One day, I will have the opportunity to enjoy my love for gardening again. One of the things that I like about it is bearing fruit. It is very rewarding to go and pick fruits and vegetables that you have grown. It takes work to produce fruit. Trees must be watered, fertilized, pruned, and cared for. Paul tells them that the gospel is bearing fruit in their lives. Is the gospel making a difference in your life? Is it bearing fruit in your life? Have you given the necessary attention to the gospel that it is constantly bearing fruit in your life? Is the gospel increasing in your life? Paul gave thanks for the Colossians because it was bearing fruit and increasing in them.

(Col 1:6) 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;

Paul also mentions who they received the gospel from – Epaphras. He identifies Epaphras as a beloved fellow bond-servant, and a faithful servant of Christ on his behalf. It is Epaphras that had informed Paul of their love in the Spirit. We could spend a whole morning on Epaphras and the commendation that Paul gives him. As a bond-servant of Christ, I want to be known as a faithful servant. I want to be known as a fellow bond-servant, a team player, who works well with others. We have established this church on the plurality of leadership. I have taught on team work and we are practicing team work. That is very important to me and to our church.

(Col 1:7-8) 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.

2. Paul Petitions

After praying with thanksgiving, Paul prays three petitions for the Colossians. He prays for them to know God's will, for them to please God in all respects, and for them to be strengthened with all power.

A. Paul prays for them to know God's will so that they can walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

Paul prays for the Colossians to know God's will. Most of the time when we pray to know God's will, we are at a crossroads in life. We want to know whether to go down this path or that path. We need direction about a job, about a church, about a relationship, about serving in a particular ministry, or some other decision. Those are all excellent reasons to pray to know God's will, but this is not the same reason that Paul gives in this passage. He prays that they will know God's will so that they can walk in a manner worthy of the Lord. I believe this primarily deals with God's general will for all believers. I want to take a quick look at God's general will and how that relates to walking in a manner worthy of the Lord.

(Col 1:9-10) "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, {10} so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord,

- **God's will is for us to be conformed to His image.** (Rom 8:26-30)

In Romans 8:26-30, Paul wrote that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us according to the will of God. He goes on to mention what that is, for us to be conformed to the image of His Son. When we are conformed to His image, we are walking in a manner worthy of the Lord.

(Rom 8:26-30) "And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; {27} and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. {28} And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. {29} For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; {30} and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified."

- **God's will is for us to be sanctified (made holy).** (1 Thess 4:3-7)

God's will for us is to be sanctified or made holy. Paul specifically mentions a few areas. He mentions that we must abstain from sexual immorality and that we know how to possess our own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion like the Gentiles who do not know God. The Greek word for immorality is porneia, which means fornication, which is how the KJV translates it. Fornication means to have sex outside of marriage.

There are many people who claim to know Christ who are living together. According to Scripture, this is not God's will for their lives. God's will is that they do not live in lustful passion like the Gentiles, but to live holy sanctified lives. God's will is for us not to transgress and sexually defraud our brother or sister. God has called us to purity and holiness. It is God's will for these couples to be immediately married, or to separate. Paul wanted the church to know God's will so they could walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

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(1 Thess 4:3-7) "For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; {4} that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, {5} not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; {6} and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. {7} For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification."

- **God's will is for us to have a godly sorrow that leads us to repentance.** (2 Cor 7:9-11)

In a similar vein, God's will is for us to have a godly sorrow that leads to repentance. Paul wrote that the sorrow according to the will of God produces a repentance. He distinguishes between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow. Worldly sorrow is sorry that they got caught, but does not lead to repentance or a change of behavior. A godly sorrow causes us to repent from sexual immorality, fornication, or any other sin that we are involved in.

(2 Cor 7:9-11) "I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, in order that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. {10} For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death. {11} For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter."

- **God's will is for us to submit to those in authority.** (1 Pet 2:13-15)

God's will is for us to submit to those in authority. As a culture, we do not like to submit to authority. We do not like people telling us what to do. But, the Scriptures teach us to submit for the Lord's sake to every human institution. Peter writes that "such is the will of God." We find that we are to submit to kings, governors, and all in authority. We are to submit to our employers. We are to submit to our spiritual leaders. Wives are to submit to their husbands. And, all of us are to submit to one another, irregardless of position.

(1 Pet 2:13-15) "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, {14} or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. {15} For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men."

- **God's will is for us to be in right relationship with one another.** (1 Thess 5:11-18)

In 1 Thessalonians 5, Paul tells us to live in right relationship with one another. We are to encourage and build up one another. We are to live in peace with one another. We are to encourage the fainthearted and help the weak. We are to be patient with all men. This is speaking of rightly relating to one another. Paul ends by telling us to rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks, for this is God's will for us in Christ Jesus. Again, the purpose of knowing God's will and knowing how to relate to one another properly is for us to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

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(1 Thess 5:11-18) "Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing. {12} But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, {13} and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. {14} And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men. {15} See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all men. {16} Rejoice always; {17} pray without ceasing; {18} in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

B. Paul prays that they will please Him in all respects.

The second petition that Paul prays for the Colossians is that they will please Him in all respects. Every area of our life needs to be pleasing to God. Our relationships with one another need to please Him. Our relationship with our spouse needs to please Him. Our relationship with our children needs to please Him. Our relationships with our neighbors needs to please Him. Our work needs to please Him. Our ministry needs to please Him. Our financial stewardship needs to please Him.

(Col 1:9-10) "For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that...to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Paul mentions two different areas of pleasing Him in all respects. First, He mentions bearing fruit in every work. In John 15, Jesus said, "by this is My Father glorified that you bear much fruit." Being fruitful is something that pleases the Lord. We want everything that we do, every ministry at EMV, to bear fruit. **Being fruitful is something that pleases the Lord.**

(John 15:8) "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples."

How do we bear much fruit? In that same passage in John 15, Jesus talks about abiding in Him. If we abide in Him, we bear much fruit. Apart from Him, we will not bear fruit. The key is abiding in Christ.

(John 15:4-5) "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. {5} "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."

I want to retrace our steps for a few minutes and connect some more dots. In Paul's introduction, he says that he is an apostle of Jesus Christ by the **will** of God. Paul has told them that he is serving in a certain role and capacity in the kingdom by the will of God. After giving thanks for them, he prays for them to know God's **will** for their life. Then, in this discussion about being pleasing to God, he mentions how bearing fruit is pleasing to God. **There is a connection between knowing God's will and bearing much fruit.**

(Col 1:1) Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God...

Part of fruitful ministry is knowing your specific place in the body, and then servicing faithfully in that capacity. Paul knew that God had called him to apostolic ministry. Paul knew that he was

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an apostle of the Gentiles. Paul then faithfully obeyed the specific will of God for his life. I say God's specific will because we are not all called to be apostles. But, all of us do have certain gifts, abilities, and talents that are to be used to further the kingdom of God. God has a specific will for each of us, and knowing that specific will is crucial to living a fruitful life.

(Gal 1:15-16) But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased {16} to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood,

In our Membership Interview Form, I ask people to let us know what their spiritual gifts are. I ask people to put down the areas that they would like to serve in. I want to know what they are passionate about. Why? We want to help people discover God's will for their life. We want to help people serve in the areas that God has called them to serve in. We want people to bear fruit and be pleasing to God in all respects.

Peter taught us another principle of bearing much fruit. **Peter gives seven qualities that will help us be useful and fruitful.** He said we must be diligent in our faith and possess seven key qualities that primarily speak of character. Character counts to God. Peter tells us that we must first supply moral excellence. Second, we must supply knowledge. Third, we must supply self-control. Fourth, we must supply perseverance. Fifth, we must supply godliness. Sixth, we must supply brotherly kindness. Finally, Peter says that we must supply love. If we possess these seven qualities, and they are increasing in our lives, we will be useful and fruitful.

(2 Peter 1:5-8) Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, {6} and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, {7} and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. {8} For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The second **part of pleasing God in all respects is increasing in the knowledge of God.** God wants us to know Him and His ways. He delights in us. We are His children. We are the apple of His eye. I try to visit my parents on a regular basis. I also try to call them regularly. They are so appreciative of my visits and calls. It pleases them. God is no different. He loves us to spend time with Him. He loves us to call upon Him. It pleases Him for us to increase in our knowledge of Him.

(Col 1:9-10) "For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that...to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

C. Paul prays that they will be strengthened with all power.

The third thing that Paul prays for the Colossians is that they will be strengthened with all power. He gives two reasons for praying for them to be strengthened. **First, we need to be strengthened with His power so we can be steadfast. We need to be strengthened so we can be patient.**

(Col 1:11-12) 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

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to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

Why do we need strength to attain to all steadfastness and patience. Understanding the Greek word that he uses helps us understand why we need strength. The Greek word for steadfastness is hupomone. Hupo means under and meno means to stay, abide, or remain. When someone is being hupomone, they are staying under or remaining under a trial or difficult situation.

It may be that you have a poor work situation. Your boss is unreasonable. Your co-worker is terrible to be around. Your work conditions are poor. You have cried out to God for a better job, but with the economy and other things, nothing has opened up. You don't know how much more of this job situation you can take. Paul is telling you that you need God's strength in order to be steadfast or to stay in this awful situation.

It may be that you have a poor situation at home with your spouse, or with one of your children. It is wearing you out. Day after day it seems that there is no relenting. You have cried out to God and told Him that you can't take much more. Paul is telling you that you need God's strength to remain under the situation, to be steadfast.

We do not know what situation the Colossians are under. Last week Tony mentioned some heresies that were going on at that time. They were being confronted with gnosticism, ceremonialism, asceticism, and angel worship. There was also an attack on the deity of Christ. It could have been governmental oppression, economic hardship, religious persecution, or a host of other things that they were going through, but they needed strength from God to remain steadfast under them.

The word for strength that is used is dunamoo. The word for power is dunamis, which means supernatural strength or power. It is the same word that is used in Acts 1:8 when Jesus tells the disciples that they shall receive power (dunamis) when the Holy Spirit has come upon them to be His witnesses. Paul is praying that they will receive a supernatural strength or power, which comes upon us through the Holy Spirit, so that they can remain under these very difficult circumstances.

(Acts 1:8) but you will receive power (dunamis) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

Paul also prays that they will be strengthened with all power so that they can attain patience. The word for patience is makrothumia, which literally means it takes a long time to breathe hard or get worked up, or provoked. It is most often translated as patience. Sometimes the Greek words give a great word picture, and this is one of those instances.

When someone or a situation keeps coming at you day after day, without ceasing or letting up, it is easy to get worked up or agitated. When someone raises their voice and speaks harshly with you over and over again, it is easy to get worked up. I had a man who kept raising his voice at me, and lashing out at me at one place that I worked. I patiently dealt with the man, but I was getting tired of it. Finally, I went to the owner of the company and laid it all before him. I told him that the next time the man came at me like a hornet, I was going to resign from the company immediately. About two weeks later, the man came at me again, for no fault of mine, and I turned in my keys and resigned. I don't think the owner took me seriously. The point of this illustration is not that I quit, but there

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are times when people viciously come at you. It is easy to lose patience and get worked up. God wants you and I to be strengthened with His supernatural strength so that we can remain steadfast and patient.

Next, Paul prays that they will be strengthened with all power so that they can joyously give thanks to the Father. When they have remained steadfast and waited patiently, and have come out of the trial, they will be able to joyously give thanks. Therefore, Paul prays for them to be strengthened with all power for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience.

(Col 1:11-12) 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.

It is a full circle. As we give thanks to the Father and praise Him, He fills us with His Spirit and strengthens us with His power so that we can endure and overcome the difficulties in life. The result is we joyously give thanks to Him.

Paul ends with something that they can joyously thank the Father for; the inheritance of the saints in Light. It is the Lord who has qualified us to share in the inheritance. It is the Lord who has made us sufficient to share in the inheritance. We have not earned this inheritance. This inheritance has been reserved for us because we are sons of God. We have this inheritance because He has adopted us as His children. We were cleansed and justified by the blood of Christ. He not only forgave us and cleansed us, but He also adopted us into His family. Now, we can give thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints.

(Col 1:12) giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

Conclusion

This morning, we have looked at Paul's prayer for the Colossians. He has written this book to a very small community. He has written this love letter to a couple of home churches that meet in houses. He has written this letter to our congregation. God cares about each and every one of you. He loves you. He has things to say to you and I. He wants you to know that you matter to Him. You are significant to Him, and He has plans and purposes for each of you.

Paul prays that they will know His will for their lives so that they can be pleasing to Him. God wants each of our lives to be lived according to His will. His will is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. His will is for you and I to live holy and sanctified lives. His will for us is to be conformed to His image. This morning, if you know that there are things in your life that are not pleasing to Him, I am going to ask you to repent this morning. I am asking You to stop what you are doing and make a change. Decide right now that you will not keep doing what you are doing. If you need help, we will help you. If you need wisdom, we will help you. God wants you to live a life that is pleasing to Him.

Paul prayed that they would know God's will so they could be fruitful. God wants you to live a fruitful life. He wants you to find your place in the body and begin to serve like never before. God

02 Paul's Prayer (Col 1:3-12)

wants to use you, and He wants to use this little body to bear much fruit. If you would like to be planted in this church, let me encourage you to make a commitment to this body. We call that membership, becoming attached to this body. Then, begin to serve. I pray for each of you to know God's will for your life and become fruitful. This is pleasing to the Lord.

Paul prayed that they would be supernaturally strengthened with the power of the Holy Spirit so that they could be steadfast and patient. I do not know what trials or difficulties you have in your life right now, but I know a loving and powerful God who wants to supernaturally fill and empower you this morning so that you can joyously remain steadfast and patient, and be an overcomer. If that is you, let us pray with you for an empowering and strengthening of the Holy Spirit in your life.

Let's pray.

Introduction

- Significance of small churches (Col 4:15, Philemon 1:1-2)
- Roles of apostles (1 Thess 1:1, 2:6, Eph 2:20, Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5, Acts 15:41, 16:4-5, Rom 1:11, 1 Tim 4:14, 2 Tim 1:6, Eph 4:11-12)

1. Paul prays with _____ for the Colossians. (Col 1:3-8, Psa 100:4)

- Paul was thankful for their _____ in Christ Jesus. (Col 1:3-4)
- Paul was thankful about is the _____ they have for all the saints. (Col 1:4, John 13:34-35)
- Paul gave thanks to the Father for the _____ laid up in heaven for them. (Col 1:5-6)

2. Paul Petitions

A. Paul prays for them to know God's _____ so that they can walk in a manner worthy of the Lord. (Col 1:9-10)

- God's will is for us to be _____ to His image. (Rom 8:26-30)
- God's will is for us to be _____. (1 Thess 4:3-7)
- God's will is for us to have a _____ that leads us to repentance. (2 Cor 7:9-11)
- God's will is for us to _____ to those in authority. (1 Pet 2:13-15)
- God's will is for us to be in right _____ with one another. (1 Thess 5:11-18)

B. Paul prays that they will _____ Him in all respects. (Col 1:9-10)

- Being _____ is something that pleases the Lord. (John 15:8, 15:4-5)
- There is a connection between knowing God's _____ and bearing much fruit. (Col 1:1)
- Part of fruitful ministry is knowing your specific _____ in the body, and then _____ faithfully in that capacity. (Gal 1:15-16)
- Peter gives seven qualities that will help us be _____ and _____. (2 Peter 1:5-8)
- Part of pleasing God in all respects is increasing in the _____ of God. (Col 1:9-10)

C. Paul prays that they will be _____ with all power. (Col 1:11-12, Acts 1:8)

- We need to be strengthened with His power so we can be _____.
- We need to be strengthened with all power so that we can be _____.

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