

Colossians Ch 1 Vs 9

Paul's Prayer (Discovering God's Will) – Look @ whole prayer but only discussing vs 9

Vs 9-12

The book of Daniel tells us that in the last days many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase, now there's debate as to what type of knowledge shall increase, is it theological and eschatological? Or is it scientific and technological, I believe you could apply it to either because in both cases our knowledge *has* increased in leaps and bounds, and with *that knowledge* comes certain benefits to man.

For example the knowledge aerodynamics and the jet engine can take us around the world in a matter of hours, what at one time might take months can now take place in hours. The internet has the power to take me anywhere in the world or give me info on virtually anything I want to know in minutes, with the advances of medical science what might have killed me 100 yrs ago can be treated with simple antibiotics or vaccines. with satellite communications I can speak to or be seen by anyone, anywhere in the world in an instant. But prior to any of these sciences, or technological or mechanical advances there is one thing that is of greater benefit to man than any and all of these things combined and it doesn't matter where I am on the planet when you instigate it, it benefits me, and when I instigate it on your behalf it benefits you, and that's what we're going to be focusing on this morning and of course I'm talking about the power of prayer.

The 1st thing that strikes me as I read through this prayer is the enormous implications that are packed into this little prayer through the usage of words like, “filled”, “fully”, “all”, “every” and the prepositional phrase “according to” in regards to God's might. 7 times in these 3 short vs words such as these are used, and there are 3 things that I would point out to you regarding the various prayers of Paul's. Because as a man so used of God we want to glean all that we can in order that we might be effective in *our* service to God as well, and I'm not saying that there's a certain method that God responds to. and So we get ourselves locked into legalism, but what I am saying is that God has revealed Himself to us through His word, the way He interacts with man and the way He desires and acknowledges mans interaction with Him and so if we're to be effective we need to submit ourselves to the instruction of His word.

Now these things that I'm about to share with you aren't specific instructions from God's word, but rather simple observations that I've made and you can trash them, take note of them, or do what you like but I believe they're worth pointing out. #1 As you study Paul's prayer life, as profoundly powerful as his prayers were, all his prayers recorded in scripture are relatively short, I don't think it would take more than maybe a minute to read through any of them.

Remember that the words, which are recorded for us in scripture, are divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit. So you don't pray anymore powerfully or profoundly than when under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, so if you want to pray a powerful prayer for someone, (a brother or sister) this is a good one to memorize on their behalf, there are a couple of prayers in Ephesians that are amazing as well, any of which you could pray for me whenever you felt led. But again the interesting thing to me is how short these prayers are (and yet packed with power), and *many* of the prayers recorded for us in scripture are relatively short, and yet they moved the hand of God.

For example when Miriam, Moses sister was struck with leprosy because of the way that she and Aaron had come against Moses we find in the book of Num 12:13 that "*Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, " Please heal her, O God, I pray!"*" and That was it, 7 simple words that moved the hand of God, and leprosy is a terminal disease, she was struck with that which would take her life. Now when we're in these situations we feel as though we're not really praying effectively unless we've spent 10-20 minutes or an hour or two in prayer over the deal. Moses uttered 7 words and God responded.

When Joshua was fighting Amorites with the children of Israel and the sun was going down, Joshua knowing that when the sun went down the enemy would be able to escape cried out to the Lord and said, "*Sun, stand still over Gibeon; And Moon, in the Valley of Aijalon (Ayalown).*" So the sun stood still, And the moon stopped, Till the people had revenge Upon their enemies. 12 words.

3 of the 4 gospels record a man who was filled with leprosy, which in scripture though it's a literal disease illustrates to us a type of sin, it's a symbol of what sin is like, numbing, causing you to decay with infections until eventually it kills you. But this leper came and fell down before Jesus and said, "*Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.*" Then He put out His hand and touched him, saying, "*I am willing; be cleansed.*" Immediately the leprosy left him."

Peter when he was sinking in the storm having walked on water until he got his eyes of Jesus prayed what is probably the most powerful prayer anyone person will ever utter and it was only 3 words, "*Lord, save me!*" and That's exactly what Jesus did, and will do for anyone who will cry out to Him, so short prayers move the hand of God just as effectively as a lengthy prayer, remember that *the strength of your prayer does not lie in the length of your prayer.* Eccl 5:2 says, "*Do not be rash with your mouth, And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few.*"

The 2nd thing I'd point out to you regarding Paul's prayer life is that he rarely prayed for himself. and I may be wrong on this but the only time that I'm readily aware of that scripture records Paul praying specifically for himself is in 2nd Cor 12:8-9 when he asked the Lord to remove the thorn in his flesh that had been given him lest he be exalted above measure to which the Lord responded, "*My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.*"

Beyond that I believe that you will find that the vast majority of the times Paul is found praying in the scriptures it's for others. and It's not that it's wrong to bring personal petitions before the Lord, but so much of the time I find that my prayer life can lean to being *self*-centered rather than *others* centered. But Paul prayed for others, for their spiritual growth and well being, that they might be spiritually healthy, and flourishing to God's glory.

3^{rdly} Paul prayed big, he wasn't afraid to seek God for radical things, things like people being "filled" with the knowledge of His will, in "all" not some, but "all wisdom and spiritual understanding. That they might walk worthy of the Lord "fully" pleasing to Him, and strengthened with "all" might according to His glorious power. Paul prayed big, he didn't think, "well, we're only human and so we're going to make mistakes and so God help to walk in your will at least now and then, I know they always won't but help to get better at it." No, Paul believed the scriptures that what's impossible with man is possible with God and that with God *nothing* will be impossible. So, "God, *fill* them with the knowledge of your will, in *all* wisdom."

(and So on as we read here) Paul prayed big, because he served a big God, he believed God for big things, because he knew the heart of God, that God wants His children to abound in the knowledge of His will. God's not into guessing games, He wants you to know His will more than you want to know it. and Paul wouldn't be guilty of having not because he asked not, and so he prayed for mighty things from God.

How big is your God? Is anything to hard for your God? Can God fill you with the knowledge of His will? Can He cause you to walk worthy of Him? You bet He can and He wants to do that work in your life even today, so open your heart to the Lord and receive His work in your life fresh again today, allow Him to search your heart, removing you, replacing you with Himself. So Paul's prayers in scripture were #1 short, #2 for others, and #3 big request on their behalf, he was an intercessor. Now we see in vs 9

Vs9

The 1st 3 words of this vs take us back to vs 6- 8, why does he pray in such a manner for them? Because they knew the grace of God in truth and due to the declaration made to him by Epaphras concerning their love in the Spirit, that is the Holy Spirit.

Now you remember that in our last gathering I exhorted you to be careful in regards to what it is that you declare about people, think before you speak. There's a little acronym for the word think and it goes like this, T—Is it true? H—Is it helpful? I—Is it inspiring? N—Is it necessary? K—Is it kind? If you can answer yes to all those questions then feel free to share it, and if you wouldn't mind someone using your name to quote what you're saying, then maybe you could say it. But be careful concerning what you say about someone else, because in your tongue lies the power to destroy an individual, to make of him one of integrity, or to rob him of his name. Prov 27:21 says, "*The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, And a man is valued by what others say of him.*"

In other words, to a very real extent, you are whom I say you are, when you're not around and what I say about you, impacts not only you, but me as well. How so? Because if when you leave here you begin to speak ill of me, how long winded I am, or what an idiot I am, then the next time we meet, you'll see me shaded in that light. Whatever you speak about me is what I'll become to you, even if it's not all totally true. On the other hand if you speak well of someone behind their back, then you'll have a tendency to view that person in *that* light, and the next time you see them you'll approach them with an entirely different mindset than if you had come down on that person.

Prov 12:18 tells us, "*There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, But the tongue of the wise promotes health.*" James 3:5-6 says, "*the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! 6And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.*" Vs 9-11 goes on to say, "*With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening?*" The answer is no, it's either good or it's bad, and yet there is such inconsistency in the tongue, criticizing our brothers and sisters and blessing the Father who created them in His image.

Epaphras declared good things to Paul about these believers, their faith, and love and hope in the Lord Jesus, and Paul responded by praying for them since the day that he heard it. As a matter of fact he says, we haven't ceased praying for you, and since we've talked about praying for people while they're doing well, and the need to be ever consistently in prayer I won't mention that today (you can get our last study's cd or tape) but I would point out one thing. Paul says that he doesn't cease to pray.

Are you aware that there is such thing as the sin of prayerlessness? In 1 Sam 12:23 Samuel said to the people, "*far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way.*" I believe that many Christians today are guilty of the sin of prayerlessness, and of the many ramifications our nations current condition being one of them.

The church as a whole has refused to humble itself, and pray a seek God's face that He should heal our land. Prayer is the lifeline of the church, show me a powerful church and I'll show you a prayerful church, show me a church that's moving forward and I'll show you a church that's taking those strides on it's knees.

But for all that, as critical as it is for the body of Christ to be in prayer it's more difficult to get believers to come to prayer meetings than probably any other single function that takes place with in the church. Last Monday evening there were 10 guys including myself that showed up for prayer, Friday evening there may be a ½ a dozen give or take, and on Saturday about the same. Now I realize that some of you work and there are *some* legitimate things happening, nor am I trying to condemn anyone, but rather encourage you, you see, what are our priorities? Monday night football? Or some honey do's we've been letting slide.

God help us, we wonder why things are the way they are, and yet the body of Christ won't pull together and seek God for healing, and forgiveness, restoration and revival. Paul says I don't cease to pray, do you want to see God do great things, then lets start praying and notice what Paul prays for (read last ½).

That you may be filled, now if you're filled with something there's not room for anything else, there's nothing lacking in something that's full and Paul desires that we would be *full* of the knowledge of His will in *all* wisdom and spiritual understanding. and This particular word "filled" carries with it not only the idea of being complete but also under the influence of or controlled by, or to understand it another way whatever it is that you're being supplied with causes you to respond in a correlating manner. So that if you're "filled" with fear, you're gripped by that fear and respond accordingly, it controls you, if you're "filled" with anger, you're controlled by that anger.

Here if you're "filled" with the knowledge of His will, that you would act out accordingly being as it were controlled by His will for your life. and This word "knowledge" speaks of an exact or precise knowledge, it speaks of full discernment and it to carries with it the idea of having influence over your life, which is where the wisdom comes in because wisdom applies knowledge. So you might have all kinds of knowledge, but if you don't have the wisdom to apply that knowledge it's not going to benefit your life.

I might read all kinds of books on how to build a house but unless I apply that knowledge I'm never going to put a roof over my head, well how is that knowledge applied? Through wisdom, but God desires to fill you with the knowledge of His will, and one way you receive that knowledge is through the study of His Word. Because there are many, many things that the bible states very plainly are His will for your life.

Everyone wants to make a big mystery out of the will of God, and I'm not debating the fact that God has a specific plan for each person's life, but surely before we worry a whole lot about what God hasn't revealed to us we should concern ourselves with that which He has revealed and then trust that as those things are worked out in our lives, He'll take care of the rest.

For instance, in the book of Eph ch 5 tells us that it's God's will that you should be filled with the Spirit, in vs 17-18 we read, "understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit." So one thing that's *not* God's will for your life is that you should be a drunkard or a partier, that's not His will for you, but being filled with His Spirit is. 1 Thess 4:3 says, "*For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality.*" So it's God's will that you keep yourself pure regarding sexual immorality, now the marriage bed is undefiled, but anything prior to that is immoral. and It's God's will for you to abstain from such things. 1 Thess 5:18 tells us very plainly that, "*in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*" It's God's will that you and I be thankful, thankful for what He's done on our behalf, thankful for the breath of life, and the fact that when we draw our last breath here, we'll see Him face to face, and enter into the joy of our Lord. We know it's God's will for all men to be saved, the bible says that God's not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Peter tells us that it's God's will for us to submit to governmental authorities and the ordinances of man so long as they don't compromise the word of God. Peter also tells us God's will at times may involve suffering, even as it was His will for Jesus to suffer, and many times He chooses to teach us various things through the medium of suffering. Look at Psalm 101 and we'll see a few things tucked away in there that express the will of God for your life. But God won't force His will upon you; *you* have to be willing to do His will.

That's an important principal for you and me to understand, God will not force His will upon you; you have to be willing to do His will. and If you're not then God will give you your own way, but when you reap the ramifications of your own way, don't go crying to God over getting what you asked for. So many times we know what God's will would be for us in a given situation but we refuse to give ourselves over to His will, and then we want to gripe and whine when we reap that harvest. One might refuse to give up fornication, and then they reap HIV or some type of venereal disease, or maybe if it's a gal she'll wind up pregnant and when she had planned on doing this or that with her life, now she's got a responsibility that she hadn't calculated and all her plans are cut short. You decide that you still want to party now and then you wind up in a car accident and killed or paralyzed, or maybe someone else gets killed instead and live with that on your conscience for the rest of your life.

Don't be deceived God is not mocked, whatever a man sows that will he reap, if you don't want to God's will that's fine. But there comes a time after the dance when you have to pay the fiddler, you play, you pay, and some times the payment bears eternal ramifications. You have to be willing to do His will, what's that involve, it involves humility, it involves submission, but if you humble yourself, God will exalt you. Establish yourself in pride, wanting your will for your life, and God will bring you low.

Satan himself bears witness to this fact, Isa 14:12-15 "*How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: (Notice where the sin took place, it was in his heart, God is searching your heart. We can put on the face of humility but all the while our hearts are getting puffed up with pride, Satan said in his heart.) 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'* Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit." Satan lifted himself up and was brought low, to the lowest depths of the pit, now contrast that with Jesus who humbled Himself, Satan said "I will" and was abased, Jesus said, "Thy will" and was exalted, highly exalted (the bible says) and given the name which is above every name that at His name every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that He is Lord to the glory of the Father.

What's the lesson? That your will, will bring you low, but God's will, will lift you up, if you're doing your will you'll find yourself abased, but if you're doing God's will, in due season He will exalt you, for His names sake and for His glory. But you have to be willing to do His will (now that you're in Ps 101 lets look at the 1st 4 vs, read).

David purposed in *his* will to do *God's* will, he was willing to do His will, and so minimal deductive reasoning here, reveals to us several things that are apart of God's will for our lives. In vs 1 we see that by David subjecting His will to God's that it's God's will that we should praise Him, that we should sing of His mercy and justice, but you have to be *willing to worship*, you have *purpose* in your heart to *praise* Him. You can choose to keep your mouth shut, and think to yourself, "well, my life hasn't gone that well this week, why should I praise Him, I don't have anything to give praise over." But I don't read here where David said; "I'll praise you because of the way things are going in my life."

We don't praise God for who we are or what we have, we praise Him for who He is and what He's done for us, we praise Him for His mercy and justice, the fact that He deals in mercy and nobody when it's all said and done will feel like they got a raw deal from God, He is just and the justifier of all who believe. It's God's will that we should praise Him. Vs 2 Shows us that it's God's will that we behave wisely, that we exercise wisdom in life, David says, "*I will behave wisely in a perfect (or blameless) way.*"

Where is wisdom revealed, in the Word of God, and God wants you to be wise, Jesus said, be wise as serpents, and gentle as doves.

Vs 2 Also shows us that it's God's will that we have integrity in the home as well as in public, "*I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.*" So many times we relax our standards behind the closed doors of our house and God is saying that shouldn't be so. Our homes are where the standards should be *set*, not *set aside*. Notice vs 3, "*I will set nothing wicked before my eyes.*" Pornography is one of the biggest industries of this nation, you would be astounded at the # of believers that are addicted to porn, and a huge problem and it just sucks the life right out them. Because the eye is the window to the soul, and through the eye the heart is defiled, in Job 31:1, Job said, "*I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman?*" Ps 119:37 says, "*Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, And revive me in Your way.*" Listen, it's God's will that you should set nothing wicked before your eyes, but you have to be willing to do His will, if you want to go to that web-site, He won't stop you, if you want to purchase that magazine or rent that movie that's your choice. But He would rather that you be like Job, make a covenant with your eyes and set nothing wicked before them. and In vs 4, "*I will not know wickedness.*"

This is the will of God, your sanctification, God desires you to lead a life of integrity and blamelessness, but you have to be willing to do His will, you have to be like Daniel who purposed in his heart not to defile himself with the portion of the kings delicacies. It's God's will that you not know wickedness, Romans tells us to be wise concerning what is good and innocent of that which is evil, David said I will not know wickedness. Now, in Romans Ch 12 (turn there and that's where we'll close.)

Vs1-2

What is this saying? That if you allow the general will of God to be worked out in your life, if you're a person of praise and thanksgiving, a living sacrifice that's holy and acceptable to God, not being conformed to this world but being transformed by the renewing of your mind through the study of His word and power of His Spirit, that that specific plan of God for your life will become a reality. You'll just live it out day by day, your life will become a progressive revelation of what God's will is for you, so study His Word and so discover His will.

If you don't know Jesus Christ and you're here this morning there's only 1 aspect of God's will that need concern you right now and that's His will for you to be saved, that's His will for your life. But it's only by the cross of Jesus Christ Jesus is the way, the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father but by Him and If you'll only cry out to Him from your heart and say Lord, save me, you'll find your name written in the book of Life and all the angels of heaven will rejoice.