

Colossians Ch 1 Vs10-12

Paul's prayer (Discovering God's Will pt 2)

E. M. Bounds once said, "What the Church needs today is not more or better machinery, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use—men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Ghost does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men—men of prayer." and Paul the apostle was just such a man, a man mighty in prayer, a man whose prayers were packed with powerful petitions on the behalf of those whom he was praying for. and For the sake of over redundancy, one of the things I would like to drill into us is the fact that we don't have to wait for people to be backslidden or in sin before we begin to pray for them.

Paul the apostle prayed for those who were doing quite well, he didn't wait till they were in sin, but rather prayed for them *before* they fell. and We'd probably be surprised to know the amount of people who were able to persevere and maintain victory in their lives not tasting that sting of defeat because they had someone in their corner praying for them.

I'm reminded of the story of Moses in Ex ch 17 who prayed for Joshua and those who were fighting the battle against the Amalekites, and as long as Moses would keep his hands raised (interceding as it were) for those who were in the battle, Joshua would be winning. But when his arms got tired and he lowered his hands, ceased praying for the people, they began to lose and be driven back by the enemy. So Aaron and a man by the name of Hur, grabbed a rock for Moses to sit on and they supported his hands for him until the going down of the sun at which time Joshua and the men of war prevailed over their enemy.

Now if the Holy Spirit hadn't given us that behind the scenes insight with Moses we'd assume the battle was fought by the sword alone. But because scripture records for us what was going on with Moses we find that the reality of the battle didn't take place down in the trenches with the sword, but rather in that place of intercession with Moses. When he was interceding for the people, the people of God would flourish and prevail in the battle, when he ceased, they began to plummet and fall. (I'm sensing a lesson here for you and me, a concept that God is seeking to get across to us).

Pray for people before they plummet off the deep end, so that they might rather prevail instead. Your prayers have probably sustained my life more times than either of us would even care to know. Remember the words of Samuel, "*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 right way.*"

Refusing to be guilty of that sin of prayerlessness in praying for the people, and here we find that Paul *prayed* for these people. He says in vs 9 that with out ceasing he prayed for them, every time he took to his knees he remembered them, and last week we began considering his petitions on their behalf of which the primary one it would seem being here in vs 9 that they might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; and then it just begins to break down from there in the vs that follow.

So that we might get back into the flow of what's being said here it's necessary that I remind you of what this word "filled" means. Because it carries with it not only the idea of being made full (which is the obvious) but also under the influence of so that it more or less dictates our actions. If you've ever seen someone filled with fear, you've seen the way that fear grips their hearts so that they can't speak or move or anything, that fear is dictating their actions and response to the situation. I've seen people filled with panic, and they flutter around and don't make sense with what they say and it's nearly impossible to get them to calm down because that panic is controlling them.

Here Paul is praying that these believers (and we can say for us), that we would be "filled", which is to say that his desire is that we would respond accordingly to God's will for our lives being as it were "controlled" by, or under the direct influence of His will for our lives. and If you remember right I told you that this word "knowledge" carries with it the same idea, it's the type of knowledge that influences your life, your learning directly affecting your living, the things you believe determine how you behave.

This desire for you and me to be filled with the knowledge of His will is a good thing, because the bible warns of the danger in a lack of knowledge. Prov 19:2 says, "*it is not good for a soul to be without knowledge.*" and In Hos 4:6 the Lord said, "*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.*" If you're living life absent of the knowledge of the will of God for your life or in rebellion to the will of God for you, you're on a one-way course to destruction. Eph ch 4 teaches us that a lack of knowledge produces instability in our lives, causes us to be like waves of the sea that are driven back and forth, tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine and trickery of men.

In other words if you don't know the truth, you'll buy the lie and so Paul prays that we might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. Now what's the corresponding result? If you are filled with the knowledge of the will of God, being as it were under the direct influence and/or control of His will (and we spent a good portion of our time last week discussing and determining God's will and this prayer reveals even more to us as we'll see) having humbled yourself and submitted to His work in your life by His Holy Spirit, the result of that will be what we see here in vs 10.

Vs10

A walk, worthy of the Lord; now this is where the rubber meets the road, the positional becomes the practical. and This is the will of God for your life; that you would walk worthy of Him. The word “worthy” simply meaning “appropriately” or “in like manner”, so a walk that’s worthy of the Lord is one which reflects in an accurate manner the heart and character of the Lord. Or to understand it another way, that we might represent Him properly, concerning the practical matters of life. In 1st Thess ch 2 Paul pointed his own life and the ministry team that he was with and said, “*You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe.*” and Then he exhorted them saying, “*that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.*”

In other words, you’ve seen what it means to walk worthy of God, or appropriately before Him as demonstrated in our lives, now you do likewise. Walk before God with devotion, being just and blameless. The “walk” referring to one’s daily pattern of conduct, the way we conduct ourselves is the way that we walk before God through this life. and I’m going to camp out here for just a minute because this is an easy portion of scripture to just sort of slide over and keep going but I believe that it’s important when discussing our walk in life that we consider some of the implications here.

“What’s the point”, one might say, “how I live my life, I’m saved, I’m covered in the righteousness of Christ, I have positional righteousness, what’s the point in practical righteousness?” I’m going to give you 3 points of practical righteousness, why it’s so important to consider your walk before God in allowing Him to have His will in your life concerning the practical matters of life, in the home, at the work place, regarding various relationships, be it a friend or fiancé’ or whatever.

#1 For your own sake, you recall that God promised to give Joshua the land of Canaan, everywhere he would tread God said, I’ve given it to you as an inheritance, all you have to do is mop up. Just remove those Canaanites of carnality from your presence and it’s yours, but what happened? Well, in the beginning it was all going well, they were getting in there and doing what they were supposed to do, but over time they just began to relax their standards, grow complacent and content with where they were at and the result was compromise. The Canaanite’s of carnality came upon them like a flood and delivered them into captivity, sold them under idolatry and debauchery and as a result God brought them under judgment and His chastening hand was heavy upon them.

What’s the lesson, that if you don’t remove those Canaanites of carnality from the land of your heart, it’s only a matter of time before complacency, carnal contentment, and compromise and you’ll be sold under slavery to the flesh. and You’ll a life of positional righteousness (maybe, lest you turn your back on God all together or Him give you over the desires of your flesh all together because of your refusal to repent.) But out of the grace of God you may lead a life of positional righteousness, but of practical misery, guilt, and regret.

You know in all my years of ministry, and my few yrs behind the pulpit I've never once had anyone approach me and say, "you know, I'm so glad that when God began to convict me regarding my habitual habit of lying that I ignored it and to this day you still can't trust a word I say." Or, "man I'm glad I've never given my addiction to alcohol or pornography over to God, it's done wonders for my spiritual life." No one has ever said, "You know my flings of adultery have had a real positive impact on my marriage and it's really done great things in the lives of my kids, my example has really shown them Christ and I've really inspired them to trust the Lord through my sin." No one has ever said those things; instead their lives are riddled with guilt, torn with confusion, and many times despondent and full of doubt.

2^{ndly} For heaven's sake, because one day you'll see God face to face, and would you rather be like Paul who said that he served God with a pure conscience and told Timothy at his departure from this life, "*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness.*" Or will you be like those whom John categorizes as those who will be "ashamed" at His appearing? I want to look Jesus in the face, with a pure conscience and hear, "*Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.*" So for "heavens sake" walk worthy of the Lord, and 3^{rdly} For Christ's sake, **Because** you represent Christ the moment you give your heart to Him and take the name "Christian" be careful that you don't take His name in vain.

You see, you've heard the saying people may never read their bibles but they're reading your life from cover to cover, you may be the only bible people ever read. and Jesus said, you are the light of the world, how so, because He lives in you, so when people see the Jesus you portray, are they drawn to Him? Desiring to have in their lives what you have in yours? Or do they see a powerless, complacent and impotent Jesus that really doesn't do anything for anyone, they don't see any difference in your life as opposed to their own so *why would I* desire Jesus?

Paul says, I'm praying that you would be filled with the knowledge of His will, that you would allow that to be applied through wisdom in your life, "that you might walk worthy of the Lord" for your sake, for heavens sake, and for Christ's sake. People don't see positional righteousness, but they do see the practicalities of our lives, and they're looking for practical righteousness, because that's what bears witness to positional righteousness.

So we see how this prayer is unfolding 1st comes the wisdom, the knowledge of His will, corresponding to that is the walk that's worthy of the Lord, one that's fully pleasing to Him, notice not *partially* pleasing but *fully* pleasing, and what is it that's fully pleasing to Him? You being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of Him, now we have our 3rd "W." 1st we see wisdom in vs 9 then comes the walk, meaning the way we handle ourselves daily, then comes the work and that's a necessary order, wisdom, walk, and work. Because I can't work for God unless I'm walking with Him, but I can't walk with Him if I'm ignorant of His will. (Wiersbe)

Now in reality we know that it's not we who work for God, but God who works "through" us, the bible tells us that it is God who works in us, "*both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*" But the point remains before the work comes the walk, because God has to prepare the worker before the work can be done, 13 yrs God spent preparing Joseph to become 2nd in command of the most powerful nation on earth, 80yrs He spent preparing Moses to lead the nation of Israel out of Egypt.

Jesus taught the disciples for 3yrs and even Paul spent a few yrs in the desert receiving from the Lord prior to entering the ministry, so God prepares the worker through his walk, and the worker learns to walk through wisdom given by God through His word. and The progression here in this prayer can be seen in a # of ways, we're sort of studying it's breakdown through the primary request, we've taken note of the 3 "W's" and we could also consider the fact that we see the Christian roots established in the knowledge of His will, the stalk, or the trunk (vine, whatever you want to say) being built up in the walk and then here in vs 10 the fruit being born through the good works that He has prepared for us that we should walk in them. That's what's pleasing to the Lord that we be fruitful in every good work, Jesus said, "*by this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, so you will be My disciples.*"

The bible speaks of fruit in various ways, the fruit of the Spirit is love, now encompassed in love is "*joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.*" You're no doubt familiar with the scripture, Heb tells us that the fruit of our lips is found in giving thanks to His name as we offer up our sacrifice of praise. Eph 5:9 says that, "*the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth.*" But regardless of the context the bible is very clear regarding the way fruit is produced (ultimately) and that's by abiding in Christ, He's the vine we're the branches and as a branch can produce no fruit apart from the vine, likewise apart from Him we can do nothing.

The bible also tells us that wisdom is a necessary prerequisite for bearing fruit, which is why Paul prays for wisdom and that which follows is fruit in every good work. James 3:17 tells us that, "*the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits.*" Lack of fruit in our lives is directly related to a lack of spiritual wisdom. Peter teaches us that diligence in our lives is related to fruitfulness as well, (look at 2nd Peter ch vs 5-9). and All of these things that we're speaking about as it pertains to what it takes in our lives to be fruitful in every good work (which by the way is God's will for your life) abiding in Christ, exercising wisdom and diligence are revealed to us through the filling of the knowledge of His will, through His word, none of these things are new revelations, I'm just showing you what God's Word says. and As we allow God to work these things into our lives then we will be fully pleasing to Him, being fruitful in every good work.

Notice what's next "*increasing in the knowledge of God*" this is God's will for your life, that you would increase in your knowledge of Him, not knowledge about Him, but knowing Him more intimately as a person. and Time will forbid us to exhaust the implications of knowing Him but God would have you to be growing ever increasingly in your personal knowledge of Him, you and I will never exhaust the depths of the person of God, therefore there's always room for us to grow, His judgments are unsearchable and His ways past finding out, there's just more there than we'll ever know and God will spend eternity revealing new depths of Himself to us.

But meanwhile here on earth He would have us to search Him out and increase in our knowing of Him, the bible tells us that everything that we need that pertains to life and godliness are already ours in Christ, and those things are availed to us through the knowledge of Him (2nd Pet 1:3). That's one of the reasons your knowing Him is so critical, and of course probably the single most important reason for knowing Him is because that's what *eternal life* is.

Now it may be *about* many things, or *include* several things, for instance eternal life includes escaping hell and heading for heaven, it includes living forever in the presence of God worshipping Him with the hosts of heaven, ruling and reigning as kings a priests to our God on the earth for a thousand yrs, all of these things are included in eternal life, but they're not the substance of eternal life. In the prayer of Jesus in John 17, the 3rd vs Jesus said, "*And this is eternal life, (not what it's about or what it includes, but what it is, the very substance) that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*" Knowing the only true God, and Jesus Christ who He has sent is eternal life, so is it any wonder that it's God's will that you would be ever increasing in the knowledge of Him?

Vs11

If you've been a Christian for more than maybe 2 weeks, you've noticed that the life of the Christian demands strength, but you've also noticed that the strength it demands goes beyond your ability. I don't have the strength necessary to lead a godly life, and Paul was very aware of the fact that in me, that is in my flesh no good thing dwells and apart from Christ I can do nothing. So the strength that he prays for, is that enablement that comes not from within ourselves that we have to dig deep for in order to muster up. But rather it's that *dunamis* or *dynamic*, dynamite like power that is infused into our lives via the Holy Spirit according to God's own glorious power, His personal power is that which He desires to impart to us, you guys this is radical.

It's God's will to strengthen your life, to enable you to lead a godly life and this word "strengthened" is a present participle which speaks of a continuous action. In other words God doesn't act in our lives like a rocket booster, just giving us an initial boost now and then, and then leaving us to fly on our own. But rather He desires to continually strengthen you with all might according to His glorious power throughout your entire Christian experience. and For what, to part the Red Sea, or raise the dead, (if necessary) but more readily for all patience and longsuffering with joy, for godly Christian character which takes us back to that worthy walk.

The inner victories of the soul are just as great if not greater, than the public victories recorded in the chronicles of history. Prov 16:32 *"He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city."* I would imagine that every believer here would bear witness to the fact that it takes the power of God at work in your life, to make of you a patient and longsuffering individual. and If you deny that, I'd just like to drive around town with you and see how you respond to some of those people that should've never been given a license, or how you deal with long lines at a check out stand somewhere. Prov 14:29, *"He who is slow to wrath has great understanding, But he who is impulsive exalts folly."* and Again Prov 15:18 *"A wrathful man stirs up strife, But he who is slow to anger allays contention."* Patience and longsuffering, notice, with joy and that's the kicker, we may be in a situation whereby we have no choice but to exercise patience, but to do so with joy is another story isn't it, that's where the power of the Holy Spirit comes in.

Don't confuse patience with complacency, patience would be endurance in action, it's keeping on going when the going gets tough, it's refusing to quit running because you want to win the race. Too many believers have a tendency to quit when things get tough, but it's always too soon to quit. Spurgeon once said, "by perseverance the snail reached the ark."

Now "longsuffering" speaks of "self-restraint" so where patience has to do primarily with our circumstances, longsuffering has to do with people and would be the opposite of vengeance or revenge. You remember that included in love as it pertains to the fruit of the Spirit is also longsuffering. In the 3rd ch of this book we see that longsuffering is to be one of the garments that cloak the believers soul.

Yet how many of us can maybe patiently endure a trying circumstance only to lose our temper at the drop of a dime when it comes to a friend or spouse or maybe our kids? Moses was longsuffering with the Pharaoh, and yet lashed out at the children of Israel only to forfeit his right to enter the Promised Land.

Prov 25:28, *"Whoever has no rule over his own spirit Is like a city broken down, without walls."* Easy prey to the enemy, God wants to enable you through His power to be a person of

godly character, patient and longsuffering, aren't you glad God has patience with you? Aren't you glad that He's longsuffering with you and that He was longsuffering towards you for so many years wooing you and persuading you towards repentance not being willing that you should perish? Well, God wants us to exude those same qualities in our lives patience and longsuffering with joy, the fruit of the Spirit is love, and what; joy. and He'll give you the strength to be of such character, and finally vs12

Vs12

It's God's will that we be a people of thanksgiving, a people who give Him thanks, why? Because He's qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance (that is the inheritance of His own Son) the inheritance of the saints in the light, and this is where we'll pick up (Lord willing next week as we discuss the means of His qualifying us.

But if you're here this morning and by chance you don't know Christ, you've never received Him into your life, this morning God wants to qualify you to be a partaker of the inheritance of everlasting life and riches of Heaven which can only be done redemption through the blood of Christ that was shed on the cross for you 2,000 yrs ago. If you're not in Christ you've disqualified yourself, but if you'll accept Christ into your heart God will qualify you, and old things will pass away and behold all things will be made new.