

COLOSSIANS 1:7-13

*Last week, we learned that Paul's gospel had come to the Colossians as it had come to all the world - the truth of the gospel. It also had brought fruit and was growing in numbers, because they had heard of the grace of God in truth throughout the Roman Empire.

Colossians 1:7 - As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;

1. Paul clearly states that it was from Epaphras that the believers had heard the gospel grace message. Epaphras evidently was a product of Paul's ministry in Ephesus at the school of Tyrannus. This was where many Jews and Greeks heard the Word.

Acts 19:9-10 - But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

Acts 19:10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

2. Tyrannus became Paul's teaching headquarters, where men like Epaphras would go to listen and learn this new truth. Paul calls him "our dear fellowservant", which has the idea of literally being a fellow slave to Christ.

Philemon 1:23 - There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus;

3. Paul loved Epaphras and counted him faithful, trustworthy, and dependable on fulfilling the ministry and standing for truth - even if it meant going to prison.

Colossians 1:8 - Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

1. It was from Epaphras that Paul himself had heard of the people's love in the Spirit. Paul makes it clear to the Colossian believers that they would not have been able to show this love, unless it was by the Spirit.
2. As they allowed the Spirit to control them, the Colossians then became vessels of the Spirit working in them. They were to use the fruits of the Spirit as a powerful testimony for the Lord.

Galatians 5:22-23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Gal. 5:23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

3. Love is a mark that demonstrates your inner being and becomes a wonderful testimony for the Lord - members loving one another. This is the work of the Holy Spirit within you.

Colossians 1:9 - For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

1. Starting here, we see Paul's prayer for the believers at Colosse, and it is a prayer that touches all the bases in one's life. Paul's intercession prayer for the saints seems to make four separate requests for the Colossians: ❶ spiritual understanding, ❷ have a worthy walk, ❸ abundant power, and ❹ a thankful spirit.

2. The first thing Paul prays for is that they might be filled with knowledge of God's will in spiritual understanding. Paul is asking God to do something for them - to supply them with the perfect knowledge of His will and to be complete (Colossians 2:10).

Ephesians 1:17 - That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

3. Paul desired for these Colosse believers to know and understand God's will for today.

Ephesians 3:9-10 - And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: Eph. 3:10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

*We see God had an overall secret purpose and will that He has revealed to Paul for us. God's will is no longer a mystery, but has been fully revealed.

Ephesians 1:9 - Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

4. Remember, the Gnostics and the heretics were boasting that they had a super knowledge over the wisdom of God. For us to grow in wisdom and understanding, we need to be filled with the knowledge of His will. We must "rightly divide" the scriptures according to God's plan.

Colossians 1:10 - That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

1. Paul's second petition is that they might be pleasing to God. Paul's desire here is that these Christian believers don't weaken and allow these heretics to tempt them by pleasing them.
2. Without dispensational understanding, you cannot be pleasing to God's will. This is because if a believer is ignorant of the will and purpose of God in this present dispensation, he will constantly misinterpret God's Word - thus causing confusion.
3. Knowing God's truth for today should lead us in doing God's will with a godly walk. Understanding the Mystery program for today will direct us and help us in our decision making.
4. Paul's third request in his prayer is that they might be fruitful in every good work. It is impossible to be fruitful for God if we do not have sound doctrine and a spiritual understanding of laying the foundation for true spiritual fruitfulness.

Ephesians 2:10 - For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

5. Paul's request, in the last part of verse 10, is for the believer to "increase in the knowledge of God". To increase means to grow in putting knowledge learned into our lives and use it. Studying and understanding God's Word increases our knowledge of God in truth.
6. Sound doctrine should lead us to the right conduct, which expresses the obedience we show to God.

Colossians 1:11 - Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

1. Here is Paul's fourth prayer request: Strength and power can only come from God, because they are produced by the Holy Spirit.

2. Lost people are in a natural state of weakness.

Romans 8:3 - For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

3. But the believer has the potential to overcome weakness of the flesh by having great power from God. It is God's power, and not ours, that enables us to walk worthy with the Lord. It is as we yield to the Holy Spirit that His power begins to work within us.

Ephesians 3:16 - That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

Ephesians 3:20 - Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

4. We see in the last portion of this verse why this power from God is needed for the believer to love - "unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness".

a. Patience - has the idea to endure whatever the strain or load we are under. This is just one thing of what God's power will produce in the yielded life of a believer.

b. Longsuffering - this means to put up with something, or someone, for a long time in different circumstances. It is only by the power of God that we can hold back - because we can stand up for truth.

c. With Joyfulness - God's power produces joy in our hearts. It is one thing to be patient or even longsuffering, but to do it with a genuine joy only becomes a God thing.

5. So, is it possible to have these qualities while enduring adverse circumstances? The answer is Yes, we can. It is not something that we can do on the outside. It only comes as we are strengthened by the Holy Spirit in our inner man. It is a supernatural thing.

2 Corinthians 4:16-17 - For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day. 2Cor. 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory;

Colossians 1:12 - Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

1. Paul now continues his prayer to the Colossians. Paul is praying that they might not only be strengthened by the Spirit and God's Word, but that they might never fail to express their gratitude to the Father.

2. In our dispensation of grace, it is right to pray to the father just as the Israelites did in Matthew 6:9 - *After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.* But, our direction for today comes from Ephesians 5:20 - *Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;*.

3. Paul is thankful that God, by His grace, has given us an inheritance with the saints of light. Paul lists some of these things here:

- a. "Meet" - means that God has made us fit, being qualified.
- b. "Partakers" - means that we get to share in and have a part.
- c. "The Inheritance" - means that we have a portion with all the saints, in the very presence of God (the Light).

Ephesians 1:18 - The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

- d. "Saints" - means that the moment one becomes a believer, because of our position in Christ (the Holy One), we are immediately called a saint in God's eyes.
4. This is why Paul said "Giving thanks" at the start of verse 12. Paul is not giving thanks for what the Colossian believers had done, but for what God had done for them through His grace.
5. Paul continues this list of things to be thankful for in the next verse - 13.

Colossians 1:13 - Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son:

1. Paul is thankful that we have been delivered from the power of darkness - Satan's kingdom. Some of the words Paul uses are:
 - a. "delivered" - it carries the idea of God rescuing us when we were dead in trespasses and sin in the world.
 - b. "power" - refers to Satan's authority over you.
 - c. "darkness" - Satan's kingdom is one of darkness, where there is an absence of light.
2. Lost people are under the control and power of Satan and desperately in need of deliverance. Satan's dark kingdom only leads the lost to eternal darkness and eventually into the lake of fire.
3. Jesus Christ is the only way and the light by which a sinner can be delivered from Satan's hold on them. The kingdom of Christ is one of love and the only way you can escape from Satan's authority is to receive Christ as your Lord and Savior.

2 Corinthians 4:4-6 - In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. 2Cor. 4:5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. 2Cor. 4:6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:2-5 -Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Eph. 2:3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. Eph 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Eph 2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

4. We have no more obligation to sin and to Satan. What's important to understand is which kingdom you want to be in for eternity. Paul is referring to the future earthly kingdom (the Millennium Kingdom). We will have already been seated in heavenly places, where our citizenship is established. We are now awaiting to receive our glorified body translation to heaven to complete it.

Ephesians 2:6 - And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus:

*In Closing, the word "kingdom" used in the New Testament almost exclusively refers to the earthly Messianic Kingdom - over which Jesus Christ will reign as King. We today are not involved in this earthly kingdom program, but we will be transferred into a spiritual heavenly kingdom - belonging to the Body of Christ Church.