

2/24/19 - Col. 1:9-14 - "Growth and Renewal in Christ"

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[0 : 00] Colossians 1 verse 9 says, Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Let's pray. Father, we ask you at this time to help us to open your word and understand it clearly, that my words can be your words, that we can expose the meaning of this passage together.

Father, let your Holy Spirit bring understanding to us this morning, because we can do nothing apart from the work of your Holy Spirit in us. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

You guys still with me? Good? I got one yet. That's not a good sign. Somebody in the back. Yep. We've seen, we're observing parallel themes throughout this entire introductory section of Colossians.

[1 : 39] Some themes will pop up out of this text if you can consider repetitive words and bringing emphasis in so doing that. Paul is bringing attention to aspects like thanksgiving, to prayer, to hearing, to bearing fruit, to growing.

And even he mentions saints multiple times in this passage. And he starts out in verse 9. It says, And so, from the day we have heard, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you. From the day that they heard is actually in reference to what was heard back in verse 4 of this introductory section, when he was giving thanksgiving, when he was giving thanksgiving address to the Colossian church.

And in some translations, it starts out where this says, in our translation in the ESV, it says, And so. Some translations say, For this reason. So there's something that Paul is building upon, a previous frame of thought, here in this passage.

So we have to bring that into this passage. He's building and connecting to the thanksgiving address that we spoke on last week, where Paul commends the Colossian church of their dedication to the proclaimed message of the gospel.

[2 : 59] We saw that in the kind of like the literary chiasm, where it pointed to the hope of eternal life, the hope of our inheritance, the gospel hope in verse 5 last week.

Paul is commending the church of this. And here we see Paul interceding for the church by praying for them, by asking God on their behalf, interceding, intercession prayer on their behalf, to continue his gospel work through them.

And verse 1 through 8 can be understood as the initiation, the gospel work that God starts. And now in 9 through 14 is the execution of that, the response of this through gospel power.

So let's dive into this intercession prayer. And the first point we're going to be discussing this morning is going to be Paul's intercession, to be filled and to walk.

Paul continues in verse 9 saying, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may be filled.

[4 : 13] We spoke last week on Epiphra being a faithful minister of the gospel in the church of Colossians. He was the founding minister of Colossians. And it speaks of this faithfulness in verse 7 in chapter 1.

And the filling which Paul speaks on here, though, is filling done by God alone. That only God alone has the power to allow our hearts and minds to be open to his word, the gospel message that we spoke about last week in verse 5.

God allows the absorption of that word, and in so doing, God is also responsible for the growth of that word. And knowledge, just as we spoke on last week, when we mentioned knowledge, this further emphasizes the cognitive function like a psychological agreement of knowledge, which is rooted in the message of Scripture that we observed in verse 4, which they heard, verse 5 last week, which was the hope of their faith and their love for one another, and also responsible for the bearing of their fruit and the increase.

It was all through the proclamation and the study of the word of God, which exposes the understanding of what God did through Christ. When we understand to have the knowledge of his will, that is the very thing.

It is the exposing of the understanding of what God did through Christ, the gospel message. And the knowledge of his will here is salvific as well, and is the very source and production of all spiritual wisdom and understanding given to us by God.

[5 : 55] As James states back in James 1.5, God is the filler and the source of this wisdom. He is the giver of this wisdom. James says, if any of you lack wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding faults, and it will be given to you.

God is the source of this wisdom that Paul speaks about. And the content of Paul's prayer is also redirecting his readers that this knowledge of his will is no longer identified.

If you consider the original audience of this time, the content of this prayer is redirecting the knowledge of his will not to the knowledge of the Torah anymore, but in Christ.

He's trying to bring them to the knowledge in Christ that is central to the gospel. It was what all the Old Testament laws and the demands of the laws that the rituals pointed to.

All of this pointed to Christ, and Paul here is saying that all is coming full through Christ. The knowledge of his will is exposing Christ.

[7 : 13] And this also highlights what Paul is driving home against false teachers who directly combats the mandates that they create, the man-made philosophies that these false teachers create, the ideas, the theories that these false teachers created.

This is redirecting that these Gnostics operate on the knowledge of their own will, but when you are in Christ, you operate on the knowledge of his will. So, since the day that they heard in the Thanksgiving section, back in verse 4 and continuing in verse 5, Paul has been interceding for this church.

The role of any pastor, mind you. To be filled with Christ-centered knowledge and to obtain spiritual wisdom and understanding. And by this, it creates a response.

And so, to walk. Verse 10 says, continues here in verse 10, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him.

Paul indicates a behavior change for the church of Colossians. And he presents three clauses or three contingencies here of this manifestation in this church.

[8 : 33] That is required and actually expected of all churches from 60 AD to, you know, how we walk in a manner worthy of the Lord today. A specific action which reflects the gospel power, which is living out a new righteous status, which aligns with our behavior in so doing, pleasing Him.

In verse 10. Or in other words, walking in a way which is consistent with your new status in Christ. And also, consider the original audience in this as well, where Jewish traditions that Paul was aware of that required a certain set of behavior, Paul's not negating a certain set of behavior, but a new behavior based on a new status given by Christ.

And this behavior is not rooted in the Torah. It's not rooted in the restrictions, the demands of the law, but it is now rooted in Christ. So let's continue to observe how this power manifests and the attributes of this manifestation.

In this next section of passage here, the string of verses, which is a continued run-on sentence that presents the outworking of the inworking seed which God has planted within our hearts through the gospel message which we spoke on last week.

So the second point this morning is I want to observe three expressions of this gospel power, which we observe in walking in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him.

[10 : 16] Church, the first expression of this gospel power to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, is by bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

So bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God. Notice that this is not a means of justification. It's not a means of salvation. It's not a bearing fruit in order to obtain a

justification.

This is post-justification. This is post-salvation because we know by grace alone through Christ we are saved. And this is an unending thirst.

It's an unending hunger that's rooted in His word for it's a spiritual craving in the life of a believer here. And similar to verse 6, by mentioning this element of faith here, reinforces that the believer's life will be something that others will easily be able to taste and to see.

and in so doing affirming the very faith that bought them. So in other words, faith seen and observed within His church is faith understood within His church.

[11 : 27] A witness to each other and a witness to the world. Faith in works is crucial to be working hand in hand. Here, James 2.17 mentions this.

James says, So also, faith by itself if it does not have works is dead. That the vital signs of our faith is contingent upon our works.

If we don't respond with works through our faith, because of our faith, because of the transformation of the gospel power in our lives, we're missing something.

Our faith is dead. And the idea of bearing fruit should be understood as an ongoing season after season of bearing fruit. Just as this verse emphasizes the increasing in the knowledge of God, this continuation of growth here.

And this verse unites the close relationship between behavior and knowledge. This is the first expression of gospel power that Paul prays for for his church, for the church here.

[12 : 37] To walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him. The second expression of how they're to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, is to being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might for all endurance and patience with joy.

So being strengthened by all power which comes from God, is God's glorious might, the source of endurance and patience here with joy.

Notice whose power we are strengthened by. His glorious might. And it's interesting seeing these two words here of endurance and patience.

Because these two words actually within the whole counsel of His word foreshadow God's working through His church through suffering and through trial.

Endurance and patience. And this is possibly in the Colossian church, this is possibly relating to the trouble that the false teachers were having and coming in trying to bring their beliefs into this church.

[13 : 55] But significant nonetheless because the usage of these two words allude to suffering, hardships, and trials in which the church is to endure not by our own strength but by His strength and His power in trial and suffering.

But endurance and patience aren't alone. There's a component, a three-letter word at the end of this that says with joy. And this is something that not often we think about.

I think not nearly enough especially when we go through hardships and trials and suffering and endurance and waiting like, Lord, is this going to happen?

Can this happen sooner? You know, praying for His will, seeking Him and plans in life, enduring and waiting patiently with joy. through God's power it creates an uncircumstantial joy which expresses from our faith even in the midst of the most challenging seasons in this life that this life can ever hold for us.

Paul was a great expression of that. His epistle of Philippians really highlights the component of his contentness in suffering and trial and having joy through it all because his joy is rooted in God's power and God's power is rooted in Christ.

[15 : 30] Simply put, it's God's power in which strengthens us to endure, it's God's power which strengthens us to be patient and it's God's power which produces joy while we endure and wait for the Lord.

It is all because of God's power in both enduring and waiting. it is Him and not us. And the third expression, the final expression of walking in a manner worthy of the Lord fully pleasing Him is in verse 12, giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance in the saints and light.

Thankfulness to God who gave us access to the keys to the kingdom, our inheritance through His Son. When we see saints and light here, we understand light being Christ.

And this creates an attitude shift as well, church. as verse 12 says, giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you. This last verse is crucial to bring all the previous passages into perspective as well because the fact is knowledge has the potential, easy potential of puffing up. It brings confidence. This has been a problem since the fall of mankind in Genesis to the casting out of Satan out of heaven. noted in Isaiah and Ezekiel.

[17:01] From the kings, the judges, the Colossian church, the false teachers, the Pharisees that Jesus addressed. Knowledge has potential, great potential of puffing up.

And so Paul distinguishes the qualifier here in verse 12. This believer is one who knows who qualified him or her. It is God's free grace to experience the gospel power previously through verses 9 through 11.

But here is also to share the inheritance of the saints in light. No one can question the credentials who are in Christ. Knowing that Christ has qualified you not only humbles the proud, but it brings assurance to those who are in doubt of this.

When you are qualified by Christ alone, you are secured, you are set apart, church. Until you finish the race, nothing can disqualify you. The grace we receive when we belong to Christ is secure. There's nothing that can disqualify you from your inheritance. Once you have been qualified through hearing, through understanding, that we understood in Paul's Thanksgiving address, and bearing fruit, this is all through grace.

[18:20] Christ is your qualifier. an inheritance, as this verse mentions, is something very important in this passage that we have to kind of rest on for a moment.

Because, and this inheritance is also to be known as an allotment, an inalienable share, an allocation set aside. To best, to best understand what Paul is saying and doing in these words is to read this in light of redemptive history, the Exodus, through the Exodus traditions within the Old Testament.

This term not only points to the new Exodus of God's deliverance of sinners through Christ, but reflects the allotment waiting for them after death.

Just as promised to the Israelites back in Exodus 6-8, it says, I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hands to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

I will give it to you as a possession. Possession here means inheritance. And this inheritance is an end-time promise which Isaiah spoke about in Isaiah 49-8, which says, In a time of favor I have answered you.

[19:38] In a day of salvation I have helped you. I will keep you and give you as a covenant to the people to establish the land to apportion the desolate heritages.

And this inheritance Peter speaks about here for us, directly relating to us today. In 1 Peter 1, verses 3-5, it says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away. It's reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

So in this third expression of walking in a manner worthy of the Lord and fully pleasing Him is giving thanks to God the Father who qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints and light the new exodus.

And the final point this morning is to highlight God, our deliverer, and God, our redeemer.

[21:04] God, our deliverer, and God, our redeemer. In verse 13 and 14, Paul ends this introduction to this epistle to the Colossian church.

And he says, He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Last week, we spoke on, we could have observed an attribute of God last week which was being merciful through the gospel, through the hope of the gospel. Today, we see God being defined as a deliverer in these two passages here.

This gives great reason for thanksgiving and brings emphasis to Paul's prayer section here which also mirrors that deliverance of the Israelites back in the Exodus and the inheritance of the promised land.

The usage of words like delivered and redemption point us back to God's deliverance of the Israelites in Exodus. Exodus 6.6 says, I am the Lord.

[22 : 25] I will bring you out from the control of the Egyptians and I will deliver you from slavery and I will redeem you by an outstretched arm and great judgment.

That through Moses, through Joshua, through Samuel, through Ezra, God delivered Israelites. God is the deliverer. And we are just a means of his deliverance manifested.

We are a testimony of his deliverance as our church today. And for the Colossian church, this meant good news of this act of God's salvation through Jesus Christ that they experience and they are expressing in the way that they walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing him.

God has always been a faithful deliverer through the Old Testament from the Exodus, from the New Testament, the ups and the downs, the lefts and the rights, the judges, the kings.

He's the New Testament deliverer in Colossians and he's still the deliverer today. Psalm 18.2 says, The Lord is my rock and my fortress, my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and my horn, the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

[24 : 00] In the actual Greek translation of the word redemption, it is to be known to deliver by payment or ransom. Redemption. Deliver by payment or ransom.

In regard to freeing slaves from bondage. And we see that playing out because in this verse, he delivered us from the domain of darkness.

He rescued us. He pulled us from this sphere of darkness, this life of darkness, this domain of darkness and has transferred us. He has transferred us.

Let me highlight that a little bit more. He has transferred us, church, to the kingdom of his beloved son. The good news of Jesus Christ, the gospel message which we highlighted, the emphasis of last week's Thanksgiving address to this church in verse 5, is that it is by God's power and God's will that he made a way for us to be saved from the domain of darkness which he pulled us out from.

He delivered us. He redeemed us. He transferred us by his son. We have by him and him alone through his grace.

[25 : 27] And the good news of Jesus Christ, church, is the reality that the only thing that we can bring to this salvation is the sins we bear. And in so doing, God removes that through repentance.

And God places our sins upon himself which were nailed to a cross and covered by his blood to suffer the penalty that we deserve.

once God does a work within his people, there is no adding to this salvation. There is no taking away from this salvation. This is salvation complete.

There is a hope secured not by our merit but Christ's merit. It was by the deliverance and provision of God that led the Israelites throughout the whole Exodus through the wilderness and likewise, church, it is still God's provision and his deliverance, his alone of us being transferred from the domain of darkness into his beloved son, Jesus Christ.

And it doesn't stop there because in this we have redemption for the forgiveness of our sins, the ransom for the forgiveness of our sins. It is all about Christ, the actual deliverer of God's people which was revealed to us through the Old Testament which to the Old Testament audience was a foretaste of what was to come which was Christ and which we see today as the incarnated New Testament word and hope of Christ today.

[27 : 08] Through Paul's thanksgiving and prayer address to the Colossians we should know something sitting here together gathered with his word today. We should be encouraged.

We should know something by now. That the fibers within this entire stretch of verses between verse 1 and verse 14 have, I'll put them as like fibers that are just wound together so tight which actually describe the essence of his church body.

So I want to highlight these three things which we should know and observe within not only the Colossian church but our church today.

The first one is the act of knowing Christ that he is the object, he is the substance of our message in this church. Number two, the act of understanding, intaking his word, hearing, being strengthened and growing internally within us.

And third, is the act of responding externally, doing something, walking in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing him and bearing fruit.

[28 : 33] So my prayer is that these very same fibers within our church as we just finish this introductory section, that these three fibers will be wound so tightly within our local congregation here, the local congregation of saints in this church.

And I pray that we'll be an intentional church family that is devoted to the hearing of God's word and the doing of God's word. Please pray with me as we close our time in prayer and have a time of communion together as this church.

Father, we thank you for your word, Father, the power of your word. Father, that this word refines us, this word shapes our lives, is through your power in which we endure, it is by your power in which we wait patiently with joy, it is by your power that we bear fruit, it is by your power that we give thanks.

Father, I pray that you do a work in this church through this gospel message, that whenever we gather in this word, Father, that it changes us, that through your Holy Spirit, it guides us, it convicts us, it directs us, Father, let these fibers unite this church and build upon you, let us not focus our attention to programs and service order, things like that, Father, let us not get in the way of your work, but Father, let us yield to you, at all times, so that this world, this community can see Christ through this church, through this assembly of believers here.

We thank you and we praise you for the work that you will continue to do within us and within our church body. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.