

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 3-20-16 PM NOTES
"PRAYING WITH CONFIDENCE"
COLOSSIANS 1:9-12
2 in Series, "Jesus Is Enough"

Colossians 2:10a (NASB) "and in Him you have been made complete..."

2 Corinthians 11:3 (NASB) "But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ."

1 John 5:14-15 (NASB) "14 This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him."

I. The Specific Requests (V9)

A. The Knowledge of God's Will (V9a)

1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NASB) "pray without ceasing".

John 16:6 (NASB) "But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart."

Luke 6:11 (NASB) "But they themselves were filled with rage, and discussed together what they might do to Jesus."

Hosea 4:6a (NASB) "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."

Ephesians 5:17 (NASB) "So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is."

"God's will is not a secret; He has revealed it in His word. For example, it is God's desire that a person be saved. **1 Timothy 2:4 (NASB)** 'who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.' **2 Peter 3:9 (NASB)** 'The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.' Once a person is saved, it is God's will that he be filled with the Holy Spirit. **Ephesians 5:17-18 (NASB)** says, '17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit'. Furthermore, sanctification is God's will. **1 Thessalonians 4:3a (NASB)** 'For this is the will of God, your sanctification...' God also wills that the believer be submissive to government. Peter writes in **1 Peter 2:13, 15 (NASB)** '13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority... 15 For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.' Suffering may also be God's will for the believer. **1 Peter 4:19 (NASB)** 'Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.' Finally, giving thanks is God's will. Paul writes in **1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NASB)** 'in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.'" - John MacArthur

Psalms 37:4-5 (NASB) "4 Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart. 5 Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He will do it."

B. All Spiritual Wisdom and Understanding (V9b)

Romans 8:28-29 (NASB) "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 those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren".

II. The Expected Result (V10-12)

A. A Worthy Walk (V10a)

B. A Pleasing Walk (V10b)

2 Corinthians 5:9 (NASB) “Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.”

C. A Fruitful Walk (V10c)

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

Romans 7:4 (NASB) “Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.”

D. A Progressing Knowledge of God (V10d)

Philippians 3:10a (NASB) “that I may know Him...”

E. A Powerful Walk (V11a)

Ephesians 3:16 (NASB) “that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man”.

F. A Patient Walk (V11b)

First Baptist Church Powell, TN 3 20 2016 PM

Sermon 2: Praying with Confidence

Series: Jesus Is Enough

Colossians 1:9-11

When a person is born into God’s forever family, he or she is born with all that is needed for growth and maturity. There is no other experience needed after the new birth. There is no “second blessing.” Being made a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), having the Holy Spirit baptize us into Christ, and then having the Holy Spirit to indwell us (Romans 8:9b), we have all that we need to grow, mature and to progressively be conformed to the likeness of Christ. There may be a joyous experience when we discover and appropriate what happened to us at salvation, but there is no “second blessing” in the sense of getting something that you didn’t have before. The theme of Colossians is “Jesus is enough!” The key verse in the book is Colossians 2:10a: “and in Him you have been made complete...” Notice the tense – “have been made complete.” In the last message we saw that the tense is the perfect tense which means it is

something that happened in the past with results continuing into the present. The word translated “complete” means to be full, to have all that is needed. It is translated in the ESV, “you have been filled in Him.” The abundant Christian life is continually discovering and appropriating by faith what happened to us when we experienced the new birth and received Jesus Christ by faith. There are many who would say, “That is an oversimplified approach to the Christian life; it is actually much more complicated than that.” I disagree. I would share with you the concern that the Apostle Paul voiced in 2 Corinthians 11:3: “But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.”

The section of Colossians we begin in this message is a part of a larger passage (Colossians 1:9-20) that is one long sentence with 218 words in the Greek language. The first four verses of this long sentence is a prayer. Prayer is the main focus of this message. Like most everything in the Bible, man tends to make prayer more complicated than it really is. When it comes to prayer, I would say again with Paul in 2 Corinthians 11:3b, don’t “be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.”

Whenever we see a prayer in the Bible, we should give special attention to it. A large part of our prayers should be personalizing and praying in faith the prayers that are right out of the Scripture. If you are praying Scripture, you can be assured that you are praying in the will of God. 1 John 5:14-15: “This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us *in* whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.” If you are praying the Word of God in its context, you are praying the will of God. As we read this prayer, notice that though Paul is in prison for preaching the Gospel, he doesn’t pray for himself; he prays for these new Christians at Colossae.

My wife is the greatest prayer warrior I know and she wears this prayer out! If you want to know what to pray for your family, your pastors, your LifeGroup leader, or any believer (especially new believers), just pray this prayer. I’m not talking about a mindless repeating of words, but a personalized heartfelt, often emotional, and mingled with faith prayer based on these verses.

I. The Specific Requests (v 9)

What does “For this reason” refer to? It refers to the encouraging report he has heard about them from Epaphras. Specifically, it is because of their “faith in Christ Jesus” (v 4b). Paul is saying, “Because your faith is real and is being evidenced, I want to share some things with you that will insure your growth and your protection from false teaching that you already have been or soon will be exposed to.” Let’s examine the details of what Paul prays for this church and what we need to pray for others.

A. The Knowledge of God’s Will (v 9a)

What does Paul mean by the phrase, “we have not ceased to pray for you.”? It doesn’t mean a literal 24/7 on his knees concentrated focus on the Colossians and their growth and their protection from the dangers he knows that they will face. We see this type of language concerning prayer in other places from Paul. We read in 1 Thessalonians 5:17: “pray without ceasing.” It means that Paul remained in an attitude of God consciousness and people consciousness. As the Colossians came to Paul’s mind, he immediately lifted them up to the Lord. As he heard about the false teaching that was growing that these new believers would certainly be exposed to, he prayed for them. I have not nearly *arrived* in this continuous prayer attitude, but I long to. Our lives ought to be so filled with prayer that if we suddenly died of a heart attack, we would just finish the conversation in Heaven we were having with our Lord.

What was the content of this continuing prayer? It was first that the Colossians would have knowledge of God’s will. Notice the word “filled” in relation to God’s will. This word has a prefix that means “to be completely or fully filled with the knowledge of His will.” This word has the idea of being so permeated by something that you are totally controlled by it. In fact, it would not be a wrong translation to say, “that you may be controlled by the knowledge of His will.” Let me give you an example of how this word is

used in other places. On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus said to His disciples in John 16:6: “But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.” That means that this sorrow permeated their lives and took control. We read in Luke 6:11: “But they themselves were filled with rage, and discussed together what they might do to Jesus.” This passage is referring to the unbelieving Jewish leaders who were so controlled with rage toward Jesus that they were blinded to the truth and the Scriptures that He actually fulfilled. In the same way, Paul prays that the Colossians (and us) would be so filled with the will of God that it controls our desires, our setting of priorities, and our use of time. Let’s focus for a moment on “knowledge.” God said in Hosea 4:6a: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.” “Knowledge” as it is typically dealt with in the Bible is not theoretical or speculative. Knowledge in the Scriptures is life changing. I fear that we have developed what I would call a “seminar mentality” today that collects knowledge like some collect stamps or coins. That is not the way *knowledge* is used in this text. In the Bible, knowledge changes our behavior! To have knowledge of God’s will speaks of a controlling knowledge, not just “information knowledge.” Paul is praying that the Colossians would be filled with (controlled by) the will of God. Often I run into people who want to know the will of God for curiosity purposes and to then determine whether or not they are willing to do what God’s will is for their lives. You won’t hear from God because you are not willing to be “filled with the knowledge of His will.”

Let’s camp out a short while on the will of God. When we are ready to be filled with (controlled by) the will of God, we will know His will. God desires and expects us to know His will. Ephesians 5:17: “So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”

The overwhelming majority of the will of God is clearly laid out in the Scriptures. One of the top life shaping books I ever read was actually a little booklet by John MacArthur. I think that the title was, “God’s Will is Not Lost.” I’ve misplaced the little book, but I remember most of the content. In preparation for this message, I ran across a summary of that little booklet:

God’s will is not a secret; He has revealed it in His word. For example, it is God’s desire that a person be saved. 1 Timothy 2:4: “who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” 2 Peter 3:9: “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.” Once a person is saved, it is God’s will that he be filled with the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5:17-18: says, “So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.” Furthermore, sanctification is God’s will. “1 Thessalonians 4:3a: ‘For this is the will of God, your sanctification...’” God also wills that the believer be submissive to government. Peter writes in 1 Peter 2:13, 15: “¹³ Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority... ¹⁵ For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.” Suffering may also be God’s will for the believer. 1 Peter 4:19: “Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.” Finally, giving thanks is God’s will. Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 5:18: “...in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

[John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Colossians and Philemon*, page 29]

When Paul prays that the Colossians would be “filled with the knowledge of His will,” he was praying concerning God’s will revealed in the Scriptures. When we are totally submitted to Him and doing His will in the clear things revealed in His word, we will know and have a settled peace concerning the few details that aren’t specifically revealed in God’s word. In fact, He will put a desire in our heart for His will when we are totally trusting in and totally yielded to His will. Psalms 37:4-5: “Delight yourself in the

Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, and He will do it.” Paul first requests that we would be filled with the knowledge of God’s will.

B. All Spiritual Wisdom and Understanding (v 9b)

Wisdom is not common sense. It is given by God. It is God giving us insight into what He is doing. Without wisdom, I may see the loss of a job as a *bad break*, as being a “victim of circumstances.” With wisdom I see the loss of a job as one of the ways that God is drawing me closer to Himself and conforming me to the likeness of Christ. Romans 8:28-29: “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. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.”

Understanding is related to wisdom, but they are not synonyms. Basically, understanding is applying wisdom to the details of my life. Wisdom is more the broad strokes and understanding is the practical application of wisdom to the details of my life.

The apostle Paul is making the specific request that the Colossian believers would be controlled by, consumed by, the knowledge of God’s will, and that they would have wisdom and understanding in the application of that will. Pray that for yourself; pray that for your family; pray that for your spiritual leaders. You can pray it with confidence and faith because you are praying what God inspired in His Word.

II. The Expected Result (v 10-11)

In these two verses, Paul gives us the results we can expect when we pray for others to be “...filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.”

A. A Worthy Walk (v 10a)

Walking in this context refers to our daily conduct. He is praying that the Colossians would be so consumed with the will of God and with God given wisdom and understanding that their daily walk would be worthy of the Lord. This refers to a walk, a pattern of life that puts God on display. This is of course impossible in the strength of the flesh, but when filled with the Spirit, it is gloriously possible. Walking worthy is a common exhortation in Scripture. After 3 chapters of telling us our resource in Ephesians 1-3, we are told in Ephesians 4:1: “Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.” 1 Thessalonians 2:12 says, “so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.” A worthy walk is when our daily behavior matches who we are in Christ. In the military, it may come out like this: “You are a Marine! Act like one instead of a big baby.” You are a soldier; act like one.” Even so, if you are in Christ, walk worthy of who you are.

B. A Pleasing Walk (v 10b)

Every person who has been born again has a desire to please God. 2 Corinthians 5:9: “Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.” As we pray for others, we are to pray that they would have wisdom and understanding as to how to please the Lord in every circumstance of life. That ought to be the constant prayer for ourselves, “Lord, what would please you in this situation.”

C. A Fruitful Walk (v 10c)

As we walk in the knowledge of His will with spiritual wisdom and understanding, there will be fruit. Several things are referred to as fruit in the Scriptures. Basically, fruit is the evidence that we are Christ’s disciple. Jesus said in John 15:8: “My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and *so* prove to be My disciples.” Paul wrote in Romans 7:4: “Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the

dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.” Though there are many different emphases concerning fruit in Scripture, basically fruit is all that we accomplish in Christ’s power that has eternal significance. To put it in other words, fruit is the product of a Christ controlled, Christ exalting life. By human standards, we may accomplish a lot in the power of the flesh, but God is not impressed. Genuine fruit is that which the Spirit of Christ produces in and through us.

D. A Progressing Knowledge of God (v 10d)

This speaks of a progressing deeper intimacy and deeper “knowing” the person of God. This is the knowing of God that Paul spoke of in Philippians 3:10a: “that I may know Him…” As we experience the knowledge of God’s will and spiritual wisdom and understanding, we grow deeper in our love and adoration of Christ and our love for Him matures and we enjoy Him in ways we never could have before.

E. A Powerful Walk (v 11a)

This verse is very similar to Ephesians 3:16: “that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man.” Notice the strength that Paul is praying for. We are not talking about just enough strength to squeak by; we are talking about an amazing more than enough strength. Our God is omnipotent and the strength He makes available to us is without limit. The Greek word translated “might” refers to strength in action. It is God’s might that strengthens us. How much might is available to us? All that we need to be capable of accomplishing all that He sets before us to do for His glory!

We don’t work up the power to obey and glorify God; He sends down the power through His Holy Spirit! Our problem is that we often fail to live with a constant awareness and dependence on the indwelling Holy Spirit. We know that He dwells in us with our heads, but in our daily life we act as if it is all up to us. A person who obeys and glorifies God by trusting the Holy Spirit to give them the strength to obey and glorify God is a person who cannot be explained. When people look at the church and see the lives transformed, families put together, sacrifices in giving and going to share the gospel, an unexplainable love and forgiveness toward those who have wronged them, and the only explanation is the strength God supplies, then God is glorified. Adrian Rogers used to say, “If a church is not supernatural, it is superficial.” If you are struggling in the Christian life and living in defeat, pray in faith that you would walk trusting in the Holy Spirit to strengthen you.

F. A Patient Walk (v 11b)

The word translated “steadfastness” and the word translated “patience” are very similar in meaning. The word translated “steadfastness” refers to being patient in tough circumstances and the word translated “patience” refers to being patient with people. The knowledge of God’s will, spiritual wisdom, and understanding enable us to endure trials relating to circumstances and also to people. We endure not with misery, but “joyously.”

Conclusion

What a prayer! Pray this for yourself; pray this for your family; pray this for the elders of our church; pray this for struggling Christians. When you pray this, you can be assured that you are praying in the will of God because it is the Word of God.

NASB (New American Standard Bible)

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