

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE - 5.7.2023

AN EPIC MESSAGE, CALLING, AND REDEMPTION

I. INTRODUCTION

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

2 To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, **4** since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, **5** because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, **6** which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, **7** just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf **8** and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

9 And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, **10** so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; **11** being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; **12** giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. **13** He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, **14** in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

- Colossae was a Roman city in Asia. About 100 miles from Ephesus and right down the road from Laodicea.
- As far as we know, Paul never visited the church in Colossae.
- Paul is writing with the authority of an apostle.
- He addresses it to fellow brothers in Christ, even though he's never met them face to face.
- Epaphras is in Rome visiting Paul and giving him an update on the church in Colossae.
- Paul thanks God in his prayers for the Colossians! He's gotten a good report from Epaphrus about them!
- Paul indicates that their faith and love is because of the hope they have laid up in heaven.

II. AN EPIC MESSAGE

Verses 5-8

- Paul received Christ after meeting Him on the road to Damascus. He then went to Ephesus and preached the gospel. Epaphrus heard the gospel in Ephesus and received it and then went back and shared it with the people in Colossae and some of them received it.
- The gospel is to be shared!
- Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (ESV)
- This is why the message was, and is, bearing fruit and increasing - it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.
- Do we see it bearing fruit, and increasing? If you don't, then maybe a better question to ask is "Are we engaging in gospel proclamation?"

III. AN EPIC CALLING

Verses 9-11

- To walk in a manner worthy of the Lord means to live, to behave in a way that is fitting for a follower of Jesus. A way that fully pleases him.
- Ephesians 4:1 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, (ESV)
- Philippians 1:27 Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, (ESV)
- He says "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ." For Christians, this is the exclusive manner in which we are to live. It's not

optional. There isn't another manner available to us.

- We are responsible to live in a way that mirrors the truths we are learning as we read God's word.
- We are called to live in a way that exalts and brings glory to Christ.
- 1 Thessalonians 2:11–12 [11] For you know how, like a father with his children, [12] we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory. (ESV)
- The Thessalonians were exhorted, encouraged, CHARGED, to walk in a manner worthy of God.

- Do we desire this type of life? Do we want our lives lived in a way that is worthy of our Lord? Do we want to be fully pleasing to him? Do our lives reflect this calling?
- This is not a legalistic demand - live fully pleasing to him. This is the beautiful outcome of a life that is lived, filled by the knowledge of his will.
- This can only begin from the point of our salvation. We are being sanctified, being made more like Christ. Our lives are conformed to him.
- It is a lifelong process, and one that won't be complete until we are united with him and our sanctification is done.
- What does a life fully pleasing to God, worthy of the Lord look like?

Its Bearing Fruit

- Living a life pleasing to God leads to bearing fruit through the good works that are the result of a heart that has been saved and is being sanctified by God.
- Good works don't lead to salvation. Good works are the evidence of our salvation.
- They are the natural outcome of a heart that has been shown immense grace, mercy, kindness, and love from a Holy God and now begins to reflect those same mercies in their own actions.
- Our actions matter to God.
- Galatians 5:22–23 [22] But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, [23] gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
- Ephesians 2:10 [10] For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (ESV)
- They matter to God because we are his workmanship, he is at work in our hearts, changing our hearts, making us more like Christ.
- Do you have these? Is your life bearing fruit?

It's Increasing in the knowledge of God

- A life lived fully pleasing to the Lord is bearing fruit AND increasing in the knowledge of God.
- We are to be growing in our knowledge of God! Seeking to learn more of him! That is a well of endless depth!
- God has graciously revealed himself to us through his son, through his word, through the work of the holy spirit in our hearts.
- Ephesians 3:17–19 [17] that you, being rooted and grounded in love, [18] may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, [19] and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (ESV)
- As we grow in our knowledge of him, fruit, good works, qualities that reflect him such as love, gentleness, and kindness come forth from our lives.
- There is a progression here: as we fill ourselves with the knowledge of his will, we grow in godly wisdom and understanding. And the more we grow in godly wisdom and understanding, the more we will walk in a manner worthy of our Lord. The more fully pleasing to him we will be.

How Do We Live Fully Pleasing to Him?

- Two ways: Be filled with the knowledge of his will and be strengthened according to his glorious might.

Be Filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding

- This is how it's possible to live a life fully pleasing to him! Be filled with the knowledge of his will!
- Live according to spiritual wisdom. Live with spiritual understanding. A life that seeks first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.
- Fill yourselves with the knowledge of him! And of the knowledge of his will.
- What does it mean to be filled with the knowledge of his will? Seek the will of God, learn it, be controlled by it.
- His providence is behind the very existence of this world, behind all of creation.
- God is the one who works all things according to the counsel of his will.
- Part of God's will is and will remain a mystery to us. His secret will.
- Deuteronomy 29:29 "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law. (ESV)

- There are things that only God knows. When we ask the question, "why?", there are "why's" that only He knows the answer to.
 - But there are things also that are revealed to us that we may do all the words of his law.
 - And where do we find God's will revealed to us? In Scripture.
 - Don't be consumed or led astray with worldly ideology, empty philosophy, don't lean on your own understanding, be filled with the knowledge of his will!
 - Being filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding is what they needed to live lives fully pleasing to God
 - Gain spiritual wisdom! Study the scripture so that your understanding would be on point! Aligned with God's word and his will.
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- James tells us there is wisdom that comes from above, and then there is wisdom that is earthly and ungodly:
 - James 3:13–17 [13] Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. [14] But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. [15] This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. [16] For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. [17] But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. (ESV)
 - What is wisdom from above? It's pure. It's peaceful. It's gentle. It's not argumentative. It's merciful. It's fruitful, impartial, and sincere.
 - This is a stark contrast to the earthly wisdom, false knowledge, and humanistic reasoning which were prevalent in Colossae.
 - There is no room to mix and match the faith we have with other philosophies, other religions, other spiritual practices.
 - Ephesians 4:4–6 [4] There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—[5] one Lord, one faith, one baptism, [6] one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (ESV)
 - Paul's struggle for these Christians is real! These are loving Christians, faithful Christians, they are bearing fruit! But they are being threatened. With what?
 - Plausible arguments. Philosophy and empty deceit. Human traditions. Mixing spiritualism and interactions with the spiritual realm.
 - Paul feels a pastoral responsibility for these Christians and he says he struggles over this! Let no one delude you with plausible arguments! Don't be taken captive by philosophy, by traditions, by spiritualism!
 - It's in Christ, and Him alone, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.
 - Paul struggles that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ!
 - There is a mystery out there! And you can be fully assured that you know what that mystery is! It's Christ! When you know Christ, you have understanding and knowledge of God's mystery!

Being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might

- A life that is pleasing to the Lord is strengthened with all power. Not worldly power. Not human strength. Strengthened with all spiritual power according to his glorious might.
- These Christians in Colossae were facing teachings that were promoting other sources of spiritual power, false ones. Looking to spiritual visions, practices, powers that sensuously fills your mind in a gratifying way.
- In Colossians 2:18 he warns them "Let no one disqualify you with these things"
- A life lived fully pleasing to God is not powerful in the ways the world seeks power. Nor in the way the flesh is gratified by power.
- It is strengthened with all power according to his glorious might. We are strengthened, empowered not because we are strong, we are weak, but because he is strong. According to his glorious might.
- There is nothing lacking in his power.
- 1 Peter 5:6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, (ESV)

Leading to Joyful Patient Endurance

- Our strength will fail. Our power is not endless. Worldly power is corrupted.
- But when we are strengthened with his power, we will endure. We will have the patience we need in each moment because our strength is not our own, but from the mighty one.
- Being strengthened leads to joyful patient endurance.
- Joy though, comes from outside our circumstances.
- And we can endure every moment, no matter how hard, no matter how dark, because we've been strengthened with the power of a mighty God.
- And so we can endure patiently with joy. Living a life fully pleasing to the Lord.
- When we are strengthened with his power, we will endure patiently with joy, and our lives will be fully pleasing to God.
- Give thanks as we live lives pleasing to him, because it's only possible because of what He's done for us in Christ.

IV. AN EPIC REDEMPTION

- Colossians 1:12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. (ESV)
- Tim Keller says "It's one thing to be grateful. It's another to give thanks. Gratitude is what you feel. Thanksgiving is what you do".
- And now we can call the one to whom we are thankful, Father. We have been made his children and reconciled to him by the blood of Christ.
- Look at all the things Paul mentions that the Father has done which we are to give thanks for:

He's Qualified Us

- It's the Father who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.
- Paul is telling us though that it's God who has qualified us. This also means that previously we were unqualified. We couldn't qualify ourselves.
- God qualified us when he sent his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to suffer and die on our behalf. Paying for our sins, having none of his own. He qualified us.
- Now we are qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints as sons and daughters of God.
- You cannot earn an inheritance. You cannot buy it, you cannot merit it. It is a gift, accepted freely, and joyfully by sons and daughters of a good and gracious father.
- Our inheritance is guaranteed. We are sealed by the Holy Spirit who guarantees it awaits us.
- Ephesians 1:13–14 [13] In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, [14] who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.
- Our inheritance is guaranteed. It won't be spent before we get there. We will acquire possession of it.
- Our inheritance is rich, and glorious. It's a magnificent inheritance.
- Ephesians 1:18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, (ESV)
- Do you look forward to the riches of his glorious inheritance? Does that fill you with hope? It absolutely should! We have an amazing inheritance awaiting us.
- He refers to the recipients of this inheritance as the saints in light. As saints of God, we are no longer in sin and darkness, we are in the light
- Paul was keenly aware of this; in Acts 26 he told King Agrippa that his calling to bring the gospel to the gentiles was so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God
- God was sending Paul to the gentiles so that they may turn from darkness to light. As saints, we are now "of the light."

He's Delivered Us

- God is the one that has delivered us from the domain of darkness! He rescued us! He alone has the power to do that!
- 1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (ESV)
- We live in a dark world, brothers and sisters, but we are not in darkness.
- This is a deliverance by God himself.

He's Transferred Us

- Our citizenship has changed. Our eternal destination is now with Christ in glory.
- There is a domain of darkness we were born into, having sin natures from birth, no good in ourselves, no righteousness of our own.
- But now, we are no longer. Now we have been transferred to the kingdom of Jesus, the one whom God has highly exalted, and to whom one day every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God.
- We are of his kingdom, the kingdom of the beloved Son of the Father.
- And it is he who has secured our place in his kingdom.

In Christ we have redemption

- We have been redeemed!
- Our redemption is in Christ brothers and sisters. In him alone. There is no other way.
- Ephesians 2:4–7 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, [5] even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—[6] and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, [7] so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (ESV)
- In Christ Jesus we have redemption, all our sins forgiven.

- It's only because He's qualified for us. He's delivered us. He's transferred us. And in Christ we have redemption.
- Because of the epic redemption purchased for us, and having received by faith the epic message of the gospel, we can live out this epic calling of living lives in a manner worthy of our Lord.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?