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**Walking in a Manner Worthy**

**Colossians 1.3-23**

**Series: Near to the Heart of God**

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- I. Introduction
  - A. Series – Near to the Heart of God
    - 1. Prayers of the NT
  - B. Motivation
    - 1. We can all still grow
    - 2. One of the most significant ways – prayer
      - a. Prayer is one of the challenging aspects of the Christian life for me
    - 3. Years ago – did a study of the prayers of the NT
      - a. Discovered I didn't pray like them!
      - b. My prayers were weak
      - c. Often self-centered
      - d. Lacking in theological substance – didn't reflect enough on whom I was praying to
      - e. Especially discovered that my prayer priorities were not the same as the NT authors
  - C. The Prayers of Jesus
    - 1. What Jesus Taught
      - a. So-called "Lord's Prayer"
        - (1) Really, our Lord's instruction on prayer
        - (2) We often use it liturgically; sometimes even sing it
      - b. But really meant as a pattern or a framework for all legitimate prayer
      - c. If you analyze this instruction, and analyze the prayers of the NT (and even the psalms!) you'll discover many echoes and allusions
    - 2. How Jesus Prayed
      - a. Two examples
      - b. John 17 – Jesus' Priestly Prayer
      - c. Matthew 26 and pp – Gethsemane
  - D. Prayers of Paul
    - 1. More like our own
    - 2. Still challenging
      - a. Some of the ways my prayer life has been affected have been the prayers of Paul
      - b. Have become the basis of how I pray for others

3. Challenge us to evaluate our times of intercessions
  - a. Corporate
  - b. Personal
- E. Completing the Work – Philippians 1.3-11
- F. This Message – Walking in a Manner Worthy
  1. Colossians 1.3-23

## II. Paul's Attitude Toward Colossians

- A. Text – Colossians 1:3–8 (ESV) —
  1. 3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you,
  2. 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints,
  3. 5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.
  4. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel,
  5. 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,
  6. 7 just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant.
  7. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf
  8. 8 and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.
- B. Thanksgiving
  1. Paul begins by thanking God
    - a. “When we pray for you...”
    - b. I wonder – do we usually start our prayers for our brothers and sisters that way?
    - c. What difference would it make in our prayers for each other if we would start that way
  2. Frequency
    - a. And just how often does he begin with thanksgiving?
    - b. “We always...”
    - c. He never leaves out thanksgiving when he prays for his Colossians brothers and sisters
  3. Basis
    - a. Now why does he thank God?
    - b. “... since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints...”
    - c. Evidently, the trust in Jesus and love for one another is the word on the street – and he’s heard of it!
    - d. So it drives his thanksgiving to God for these people
  4. Source of Hope
    - a. Now where do they get this faith and love?
    - b. Well, it comes from hope
      - (1) “... because of the hope laid up for you in heaven...”
    - c. And where did they get this hope?

(1) “... Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel...”

C. The gospel is the source of their knowledge of hope

1. **Colossians 1:6–8** (ESV) —

- a. 6 which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you,
- b. since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth,
- c. 7 just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant.
- d. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf
- e. 8 and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

2. This gospel is bearing fruit, and growing!

- a. As it always should
- b. Even here, in this community of forgiveness, purpose and hope in Jesus

3. The gospel is rooted in an understanding of God’s grace

- a. “... since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth...”

4. The gospel was learned from a person – Epaphras

- a. That’s the way God has determined that the gospel would in fact be communicated – through people

(1) Not through pamphlets or movies or sky-writing

- b. Epaphras is called a fellow servant and faithful minister
- c. **Fellow Servant = sundoulos (Gk) – slave with others**
- d. **Minister = Diakonos (Gk) – service to others**
- e. Essentially synonyms for sacrificial ministry to others

5. And Epaphras’ communication has worked both ways

- a. Communicated the gospel to the Colossians
- b. Communicated about the Colossians to Paul

### III. **Paul’s Request**

A. **Colossians 1:9** (ESV) —

1. 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.**
2. “And so...” – (for this reason) – basis of prayer is Paul’s knowledge of Colossians faith and love
- a. And also the nature of the gospel

B. **Duration**

1. **“... from the day we heard...”** – since the day Paul heard about them!
2. **“... not ceased to pray for you...”** (pauo (Gk) – pause)
  - a. Have not paused in praying for them
  - b. Of course – hyperbole
  - c. But it speaks to the frequency and duration of his praying for his brothers and sisters
3. I don’t know about you – I’m put to shame by this!

- C. **Petition**
1. **“... you may be filled...”**
    - a. **Pleroo (Gk) = to bring to completion**
    - b. Context – gnostic heresy which Paul begins to address in the Colossian letter
    - c. Basis for his apologetic against gnosticism is in Chapter 2
    - d. **Colossians 2:9–10 (ESV)** — 9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, 10 and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.
    - e. Gnosticism wants to create categories of believers – those who are super-spiritual v. the rest of us
    - f. So Paul prays that the Colossians will be filled with the knowledge of His will
      - (1) Because that’s who they already are in Christ!
    - g. He wants the Colossians to have the fullness of experience of Jesus based on what they already possess in Christ
  2. **“... with the knowledge of his will...”**
    - a. Epignosis (Gk) – greater participation by the knower in the object known
    - b. Thus more influence exerted by the object on the knower
  3. **“... in all spiritual wisdom and understanding...”**
    - a. **Sophia (Gk) – application of spiritual truth** to daily conduct
    - b. **Sunesis (Gk) – a running together**, to set together
      - (1) Heart is the organ (Colossians 2.2)
      - (2) Carries moral implications
- D. That’s Paul’s petition
1. And it’s one of the things that really convicts me about my praying for others
  2. What is it that usually drives our praying?
    - a. Usually some kind of crisis, often physical
  3. And what is it that we pray for?
    - a. Usually relief from the crisis
  4. But Paul flies at 30,000 feet over the crisis
    - a. He prays that they may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding!
  5. What kind of church would we have if we prayed that way for each other?

IV. **Paul’s Objective**

- A. **Colossians 1:10–14 (ESV)** —
1. 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;
  2. 11 being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy;
  3. 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

4. 13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,
5. 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

B. **Primary Objective**

1. Live a life worthy of the Lord
  - a. **Peripateo (Gk) = walk**
  - b. That our lives, as we go about our daily activities, might be worthy of the Lord we worship and serve!
2. "... **fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit** in every good work and **increasing in the knowledge of God...**"
3. Please Him by bearing fruit and growing in the knowledge of Him
  - a. Why are you still here?
  - b. Can you still grow in the knowledge of God?
  - c. Do you know Him the way you should, or the way you could?
  - d. That's why we study the word together (Study with the Pastor) and go to Bible studies and go to small groups
4. How will that happen?
  - a. "... being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might..."
  - b. **Power = dunamoo (Gk)** – cf dynamite!
5. Is that the way we usually pray for each other?

C. **Secondary Objective**

1. **Colossians 1:11–12** (ESV) —
  - a. 11 being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might,
  - b. for all endurance and patience with joy;
  - c. 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.
2. **Endurance and patience**
  - a. **Endurance = hupomone (Gk) – to remain under, to bear up under**
  - b. **Patience = makrothumia (Gk) – long suffering**
3. "...with joy... giving thanks to the father..."
  - a. Joyful thanksgiving
  - b. Is that the general affect of your life?
  - c. Or are you critical and unsatisfied with your circumstances (or with God!)?
  - d. How do others regard you? As a joyful person?
    - (1) Or do they think you were baptized in vinegar?

D. **Assurance**

1. Then Paul has this assurance as he prays
2. **Colossians 1:12–14** (ESV) —
  - a. 12 ... who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.
  - b. 13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,

- c. 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
- 3. Paul expresses the legitimacy of his expression of praise and thanksgiving to the Father
  - a. Qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light
  - b. Delivered us from the domain of darkness
  - c. **Delivered = rhoumai (Gk) – synonym for salvation – emphasis on rescue**
  - d. Our salvation is rescue from the domain of darkness
  - e. Rescued out of the power of the enemy!
- 4. Transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son
  - a. **Kingdom = baslieia (Gk) – political authority**
- 5. Redemption, forgiveness of sin in the Son
  - a. Only in God’s authority can such redemption happen!
- E. Do we every think of this kind of power and authority in our praying for each other?
  - 1. Do we have that kind of assurance?

V. **Paul’s Confidence**

- A. Now we launch into one of the great Christological doxologies in the NT
  - 1. And most often we take this passage on its own
    - a. Certainly not wrong to do that
    - b. It’s a glorious description of our Lord Jesus Christ – His nature and being
  - 2. But let’s not divorce this passage from Paul’s prayer for the Colossians
    - a. He can pray that way because of the supremacy of Christ!
    - b. The glory of Christ is the ever-present power of Paul’s praying!
    - c. Should it not be of ours?
- B. **The Supremacy of Christ**
  - 1. **Colossians 1:15–20 (ESV) —**
    - a. 15 He is the image of the invisible God,
    - b. the firstborn of all creation.
    - c. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—
    - d. all things were created through him and for him.
    - e. 17 And he is before all things,
    - f. and in him all things hold together.
    - g. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church.
    - h. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.
    - i. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,
    - j. 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.
  - 2. Only the Creator of all things can answer prays like this
    - a. Creator of all things – visible and invisible

- b. Thrones, dominions, rulers, authorities
- c. No power, no authority can thwart the purposes of Jesus Christ!
- 3. Only the One who holds together – sustains and preserves – the created world can answer prayers like this
- 4. Only the head of the Church, the body of Christ, can answer prayers like this
- 5. Only the preeminent One can answer prayers like this
- 6. Only the One in whom the fullness of God dwells is able to answer prayers like this
  - a. Only the Son who is God can do these things!
- 7. Only the One whose purpose is to reconcile all things to Himself can answer prayers like this
- 8. That's why Paul can pray like he does, with the confidence that he exudes in his praying!
  - a. Because of who Jesus is
  - b. Because Jesus Christ is the supreme One

C. **The Power of Reconciliation**

- 1. But Paul has confidence because of what God in Jesus has done in these people
- 2. **Colossians 1:21–23** (ESV) —
  - a. 21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds,
  - b. 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death,
  - c. in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,
  - d. 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard,
  - e. which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.
- 3. God has changed these people!
  - a. Has He changed you?
  - b. Paul has recognized the change, knows God is at work
  - c. So he can pray with great confidence
- 4. That's the power of reconciliation
- 5. But there is a condition
  - a. **"... if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel..."**
  - b. In English, that seems like he puts the brakes on his confidence
  - c. But in Greek, how you interpret the condition is determined by the grammatical structure
- 6. Class conditions of "if"
  - a. First – "if" and it's true
  - b. Second – "if" and it's not true
  - c. Third – "if" maybe yes, maybe not (potential)
  - d. Fourth – "if" I wish it were true, but it's not

7. In this case, because the Greek “ei” is used with an indicative verb (mood) it is the first class condition
  8. So in this case it means, “... if you continue in the faith – and you surely will!”
  9. So no! Paul does not put the brakes on his confidence in his praying
    - a. Remember – he’s heard of their faith, their love for the saints
    - b. He knows they have been delivered from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of His beloved Son
    - c. He knows they have been redeemed and forgiven
  10. So this “if” could actually be translated “since you will continue in the faith”
- D. So Paul prays with unabashed confidence
1. First because of the supremacy of Christ
  2. Second because of the evidence of Christ’s redeeming work in the Colossians
- E. Do we approach the throne of grace with such confidence when we pray for one another?