

Colossians Study – Part 3

Colossians 1:9-14 (KJV)

- 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;
- 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;
- 11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;
- 12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:
- 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:
- 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

This is the third lesson on the book of Colossians. We have learned that Epaphras was a strong minister unto the church at Colossae which Paul testified in Col. 4:12 who communicated to Paul his concerns about the doctrine being taught in Colossae. The letter itself was brought to the Colossians by Tychius, who was another faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord as is stated in Col. 4:7.

Epaphras is with Paul in Rome and some say that Colossians is a sister letter to the book of Ephesians. He stated the great conflict he had for them in Colossae and also for the Laodiceans (Col 2:1). Paul even mentions of a letter that should be read to the Laodiceans in Col. 4:16 which is probably the book of Ephesians.

When you compare the message of Ephesians and Colossians, you find that they are sister letters in that the messages in both books are similar and complimentary therefore it behooves us to read both books together.

This is an important book because it is one of seven epistles written by Paul to the Gentiles and it is where we find our doctrine which should establish our Christian walk. Paul even talks about this in verse 10...

- 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;

This walk is part of what Paul is praying about, as we see in verse 9...

- 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;

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What was it that sparked this prayer? This is not the first time he mentions prayer because you see him mention prayer in Col. 1:3 saying “We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you”.

Paul is demonstrating that prayer should be an important part of your Christian walk in that all people should be prayed for. Even our Lord said this in Luke 18:1 “...that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;” which Paul is following as a faithful steward. He even asks specifically for prayer in Col. 4:3 “Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ...”

In verse 9 when it says “for this cause”, we think that refers us back to verse 8 where Paul has declared he understands “your love in the Spirit”. Love for whom? In this case, love for one another. One of the great doctrines of Christianity is love and the love that the saints in Colossae demonstrated encouraged Paul to write them this book.

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;

What follows in verse 9 is essentially one of the primary themes in the truth called the Mystery, which is the growth of the Christian in the full knowledge of his will but that doesn't come before love. Love for one another is important because it is the basis of how we can grow in the word of God. We see in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 that love is the most important foundation of what we believe...

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 (KJV)

- 1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.
- 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.
- 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

We see the importance of love in other scriptures...

I John 3:16 (KJV)

- 16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

I John 4:7-8 (KJV)

- 7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.
- 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

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John 3:16 (KJV)

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

1 Corinthians 13:13 (KJV)

13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

Love is the most important part of a Christian walk and Paul has acknowledged this in his letter to the Colossians. Love comes before gifts that God has given you, and love comes before any actions we take to help others.

This love of God is not understood by the world. The world defines love in that it's given indiscriminately. Meaning, we should all just give each other a group hug and everything will be all right. We are not to love indiscriminately because we are taught how to love in Philippians 1:9-10...

Philippians 1:9-10 (KJV)

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;

10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;

Also, Paul tells us in Ephesians 5:2 that we should walk in love, using Christ as the example:

Ephesians 5:2 (KJV)

2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

The action of Prayer in today's dispensation of grace is usually a casualty to our own lusts, meaning we tend to pray for what we want instead of what we need. God has removed the ministry of "pray for what you want" as He established during the gospel period with Kingdom authority. This technique of prayer is shown in John 14:13-14 which exemplifies the kingdom authority they had at that time:

John 14:13-14 (KJV)

13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

Paul had nothing to do with the kingdom ministry. The aspect of prayer changed when Paul was given the final body of truth called the Mystery. We are instructed to pray always in our Christian walk today, for others and for you. We should pray for

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witnessing... in that we would do a good job for Christ. Paul is a good example of that. But in verse 9, Paul is also praying for something specific:

- 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;

Paul has acknowledged the love that the Colossians had in the first part of verse 9, but the “knowledge of His will” in the second part is clarified “in all wisdom and spiritual understanding”.

Wisdom is the Greek word “Sophia” (sof-ee'-ah); which means getting wisdom (higher or lower, worldly or spiritual). This is the wisdom of God that we need to know which comes from understanding the principles of God which we learn from reading the scriptures.

The spiritual understanding aspect of this wisdom is when we set aside time to reflect on what God has given to us. Instead of the productive time we spend doing God’s work, this is the reflective time that we spend with God alone in the scriptures. This should be the time that we meditate on God’s word especially on the truth that he has given us in the Mystery. Paul says this in verses 25 & 26...

Colossians 1:26-27 (KJV)

- 26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints;
27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

It is God’s desire that you might know the teaching of this Mystery.

Colossians 1:10 (KJV)

- 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;

In verse 10, Paul continues to tell us that this knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, is that we are equipped to walk worthy, and become fruitful in every good work.

Another way he puts it is in Col 4:5...

Col 4:3-5 (KJV)

- 3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:
4 That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.
5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

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Verse 5 talks about walking in wisdom towards them that are without, redeeming the time. Is Paul talking about the non-saved person in this verse, or is he talking about the Christian who has not come to the knowledge of the mystery?

When you back up to verse 3 and 4, we find Paul is praying that God would open up a door of utterance to speak the mystery of Christ, so he could preach this truth to others without offense.

Redeeming the time is a phrase that is used over in Ephesians 5:16

Ephesians 5:16-17 (KJV)

16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

There is not doubt that we live in evil times... we know we are in a spiritual warfare and we have an enemy that is actively seeking to deter us from understanding what is the will of the Lord.

Paul continues...

Colossians 1:10-11 (KJV)

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;

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

The walk that is worthy involves the full knowledge of Jesus Christ in the mystery and this knowledge involves sharing this truth with other Christians... but that often requires patience and longsuffering. Usually, Christians today won't understand the meatier things in scripture because they don't have adequate knowledge of the foundational truths or right division.

We seen this in Ephesians 4:1-3

Ephesians 4:1-3 (KJV)

1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The lesson ends with the giving of thanks Col 1:12-13

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Colossians 1:12-13 (KJV)

- 12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:
- 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

We are to give thanks for what the Father has done for us (past tense) in Christ with the calling of the Mystery. What has He done? He has made us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, and has conquered the power of darkness and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear son... Where is this kingdom? It is far above all principalities and powers in the heavenly places... Praise God!