

The Colossian Prayer

Last time we saw essentials of prayer. Jesus' example in prayer demonstrated its importance. He taught and explained prayer to His disciples, giving us prayer as a priority, pattern, and plan.

Today we want to look closer into prayer as a vital first step in spiritual growth.

...since the day you heard of it
 and understood the **grace of God in truth**;
⁷just as you learned it from Epaphras...
⁸and he also informed us of your love in the Spirit.

⁹For this reason also, since the day we heard of it,
 we have **not ceased to pray for you**
 and to ask that you may be **filled with the knowledge of His will**
 in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

¹⁰so that you will **walk in a manner worthy of the Lord**,
 to please Him in all aspects,
bearing fruit in every good work
 and increasing in the knowledge of God;

¹¹**strengthened with all power**, according to His glorious might,
 for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience joyously

¹²**giving thanks to the Father**,
 who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

¹³**For He rescued 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**.

Since the day Paul and Timothy heard of the faith and love of the Colossian saints they began praying for them. A few verses earlier Paul expresses the same idea,

³**We give thanks to God**, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
praying always for you, ⁴since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus
 and the love which you have for all the saints; (v 3-4).

The subtle message here is that there should be an increase in prayer when someone becomes a Christian. Turning to Christ and demonstrating Christian character should cause an escalation in prayer that is unceasing and specific.

Prayers is the priority for growth and maturity for every new believer. As a primary step of spiritual growth, prayer from other saints is a vital ingredient. It could be considered crucial preparation for healthy spiritual development.

Key Elements of Paul's Prayer for the Colossians,

1. Knowledge of God's will

Prayer ...to ask that you may be **filled with the knowledge of His will** in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

Understanding God's will is vital for healthy growth and maturity. Paul prays for the Colossians to be filled with the knowledge of God's will. We understand that the general will of God is always according to His Word. Peter writes that

"God is not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance"

(2 Pet. 3:9).

But there is also God's individual will for us – His specific will.

In Romans Paul speaks of His perfect will,

"Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." (Rom. 12:1,2)

Some Scriptures state God's will for us,

"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thess. 5:17)

Prayer is asking according to the will of God and receiving God's answer.

Paul's prayer to be filled with the knowledge of His will, is vital in receiving answers to prayer. Learning God's will may be the best kind of prayer.

"Lord, how should I pray?"

It may be that we ask for God's will to be done, even when a difficult circumstance continues.

Depending on someone's background there may be many issues to overcome, truths to understand, things to unlearn, and even habits to conquer. New believers often have basic areas to learn. When we pray we open our hearts to understand God's Word. The Holy Spirit makes us willing to do what we learn.

Jesus gave a parable at the end of His Sermon on the Mount,
 "Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them may be compared to a wise man who built his house on a rock...when the storms came the house stood firm..." (Matt. 7:24-27).

James mentioned that we should all...

"But prove yourselves doers of the word and not merely hearers who delude themselves." (James 1:22).

Wisdom means that we practice what we hear.

It is vital that we always remember to pray for one another that we will be ***filled with the knowledge of God's will.***

2. A worthy walk – living to please the Lord.

Verse 10 talks about living so that God is pleased:

¹⁰so that you will **walk in a manner worthy of the Lord,**
 to please Him in all aspects,
bearing fruit in every good work
 and increasing in the knowledge of God;

- A walk that pleases the Lord
- A life that demonstrates the Spirit's fruit
- A growing knowledge of God

If a nonbeliever were to get to know you, would he want to become a Christian?

If we make it our goal to please the Lord in everything we do, we will also be a positive witness of Christ to the world.

Will Rogers said,

"So live that you wouldn't be ashamed to sell the family parrot
 to the town gossip."

If we seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness,

there will be no shadowy places in our lives where Christ cannot be seen.

C. S. Lewis, wrote in Mere Christianity,
 “Aim at heaven, you will get earth “thrown in”: aim at earth and you get neither.”

It is natural that when our hearts are right with God, our earthly walk shows it.

- Knowledge of God’s will
- A worthy walk

3. Power to endure

¹¹**strengthened with all power**, according to His glorious might,
 for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience joyously

How do we usually pray for those who are suffering in various trials?

Don’t we always ask for their trials to cease?

Here the prayer is for strength with God’s power to endure in order to attain
three great qualities: steadfastness, patience, and joy.

[Distinction in the words when they occur together:]

All patience – Gk. hupomone

Hupo – “under,” meno – “to stay or remain”

“to endure with cheerfulness and to be confident.”

“fortitude”

Root – “to undergo and to bear trials, to have fortitude,
 to persevere”

This word means not only the ability to bear things, but the ability, in bearing them to turn them into glory – “No circumstance can ever defeat me.”
 Hupomone is the ability to deal triumphantly with anything that life can do to us.

All steadfastness - Gk. Macrothumia, “long suffering”

(1 Cor. 13:4 **Love suffers long**)

It’s basic meaning is ‘patience with people’.

“To be forbearing, long-spirited, and longsuffering.”

Barclay writes,

It is the quality of mind and heart which enables a man so to bear with people that their unpleasantness and maliciousness and cruelty will never drive him to bitterness, that their unteachableness and foolishness will never drive him to

despair, that their folly will never drive him to irritation, and that their unloveliness will never alter his love. Macrothumia is the spirit which never loses patience with, belief in, and hope for men.”¹

Hupomone – the fortitude in which no situation can defeat
Macrothumia – the patience in which no person can defeat

A person’s fortitude in events and patience with people must be indestructible.

The third quality is joy –

the attitude in which we must face the difficulties of life.

“If joy is not rooted in the soil of suffering, it is shallow.”

James 1:2 – *count trials as joy*> results in patience (Hupomonae)

Romans 5:3 – *rejoice in tribulations* ...result in patience (hupomonae)
and patience, proven character, and proven character, hope...

A tramp was looking for a handout one day in a picturesque old English village. Hungry almost to the point of fainting, he stopped by a pub bearing the classic name, Inn of St. George and the Dragon.

“Please ma’am, could you spare me a bit to eat?” he asked the lady who answered his knock at the kitchen door.

“A bit to eat?” She growled. “For a sorry, no-good bum – a foul-smelling beggar? No!” she snapped and as she almost slammed the door on his hand.

Halfway down the lame the tramp stopped, turned around and eyed the words, St. George and the Dragon. He went back and knocked again on the kitchen door.

“Now what do you want?” the woman asked angrily.

“Well, ma’am, if St George is in, may I speak with him this time?”

Christian Prayer:

“Make me, O Lord, victorious over every circumstance; make me patient with every person; and withal give me the joy which no circumstance and no man will ever take from me.”

¹ William Barclay, *The letters to the Philippians, Colossians and Thessalonians*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), pp. 131-132.

4. Praise for Salvation

¹²**giving thanks to the Father,**
who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

¹³**For He rescued 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.**

Giving thanks is connected with prayer.

Prayer can start and end with thanksgiving to God

If nothing else is said, it is a good prayer.

Key points of thanksgiving

- Share in the inheritance
- Rescued from the domain of darkness
- Transferred to the kingdom of Jesus
 - Redemption
 - Forgiveness

Paul's Purpose:

“We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.” (v 28-29)

Prayer is everyone's part in bringing fellow believers to maturity.

Prayer helps those who pray and those who are prayed for.

More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson