

2007-05-27 Colossians ch1 v9-14 (Ignite UK)

-Story of Duncan-

Duncan was an old Vietnam vet. He had served as a Marine, fought in different wars, and was floating through to retirement in the National Guard.

He had been in the service for nearly 20 yrs and never made the rank of sergeant. And when you would talk to Duncan, if you were to ask him why he never moved up the ranks, he would say that he was **perfectly content** with where he was and had no desire to move up the ladder.

All too often, I believe Christians have that mindset. **We become believers, learn a few things about the Scriptures and we become content** with where we are. We have no desire to “move-up the ladder”, no desire to grow in our faith.

TRANSITION

Paul has just finished his prayer of thanksgiving to God for what He has done and is doing in and through the Colossian church. **They are a body of believers who have a hope rooted in faith that produces a love for the saints.** But in (verse 9) Paul immediately begins to lift the church in Colossae up in prayer.

With the threat of heretical ideologies, infiltrating the church Paul wants to make sure the Colossian believers do not become content with where they are spiritually. He knows the best way to fight-off these attacks of Satan is to continue to grow deeper in your faith. He tells the believers in Corinth to:

“Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.” 1 Corinthians 16:13

-Analogy-

Why is an old tree so hard to pullout of the ground? Because the tree’s roots have grown deep into the earth!

And as believers grow deeper in their faith it becomes harder and harder to be lead astray by the lies of Satan. Paul knew this and in verses 9-14, he encourages the church at Colossae to “go deep”.

-Content-

Paul begins by saying...

“For this reason...”

Which refers to the report of faithfulness that he has heard from Epaphras. (Say something about this man).

Since Epaphras has traveled to see Paul and told him of this faithful church, which is coming under the attack of false teaching, Paul says:

“we haven’t stopped praying for you” (v. 9a)

Paul has an intense love for the church and is confident in the power of prayer. You will find Paul praying for believers in all of his 13 letters. And it is no different here. Here hears of believers that are getting ready to endure some trials and Paul intercedes on their behalf. He does not just sit in prison and wait to see what will happen, he pleads the Colossians on the foot of the throne. How often do we hear of other believers in other parts of the world that are enduring hardship, yet we go only as far as saying, “It makes us thankful to be where we are!” Maybe God has put us here in the safety of America so we can lift these other brothers and sisters up in prayer as they fight for their faith! And I think Paul’s prayers included two aspects for these Colossians.

1. Thanksgiving to God for what He has done and is doing.

2. Strength to grow in their faith and be able to stand.

It is the second aspect that the Bible records. Paul encourages these believers to:

“be filled with knowledge of His will” (v. 9)

He is saying, “I am thankful for where you are but don’t become content, continue to seek God and His will for your life.”

And that same call goes out to believers today. It goes out to us. With all the false teaching (ex) in our world today, we need to guard ourselves by rooting ourselves deep in God’s Word.

When you look at the **New Religious Movements** that are in the world today one of the reasons that they are growing at a rapid rate is because they are prepared to give a defense of what they believe. When a Mormon encounters a Christian, the majority of the time the Christian is unable to defend his or her faith. The Mormons on the other hand have studied hard and know what they believe. When an unbeliever is seeking and they encounter a Christian who does not know what they believe and then they encounter a Mormon who can articulate their beliefs very well then which belief system is the most appealing?

The Bible is very clear that being without knowledge is a dangerous thing.

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6)

“It is not good for a person to be without knowledge” (Proverb 19:2)

So instead, we seek this knowledge, not so we can look smart, but rather so we can know God’s will and be guarded against these empty philosophies.

So the question is “How can we be filled with knowledge of His will”?

(1) We must desire it!

Hosea 6:3 calls us to “*press on to know the Lord.*” The idea conveyed in the phrase “press-on” is one that means to “keep moving”, to “fight-through” adversity. This in itself points to a “desire” within a person to get somewhere or gain some sort of knowledge.

So if we are going to come to a “knowledge of His will” then we have to desire it. This means that we “press-on” towards knowing our Lord.

The desire must be there. If there is no desire to know “God’s Will” then we will never exert the energy to find it.

(2) Depend on the Holy Spirit.

It is the Spirit of God who has been sent to “*guide us into all truth*”. [1 Corinthians 2:10-12 says it is only the Spirit that “*searches the deep things of God (v. 10)* and “*no one knows the concerns of God except the Spirit of God*” (v. 11) and we as believers have “*not received the spirit of this world, but the Spirit who is from God, in order to know what has been freely given to us by God*” (v. 12)]

So here, Paul is saying that as believers, we have received the Spirit of God, who indwells all true believers and it is the Spirit that will lead you to God’s will for your life.

If we are going to “*be filled with the knowledge of His will,*” we must desire it and depend upon the Spirit to give it.

(3) We must study the Scriptures.

As we desire to know God’s will for our lives and depend upon the Spirit we must realize that the Spirit works through the word to make the believer...

“*adequate, equipped for every good work.*” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

“Adequate” can also be translated “complete”. The Scriptures are what God has chosen to be the primary source of revelation of Himself to mankind. It is through the Word that God shows the believer His will for their life.

SUMMARY—So Paul says do not be content where you are, seek to grow in the knowledge of God’s will for your life. But if you are going to find it, you must desire it, depend upon the Spirit to give it, and study the Scriptures to see it.

That is Paul’s petition to the Lord on behalf of the Colossian believers and all believers today. The result of seeking “the knowledge of God’s will” is so that:

“You may walk worthy of the Lord...and growing in the knowledge of God” (v. 10)

Paul wants these Colossian believers to keep living lives that give honor to God. Again, he does not want them to become content.

As believers, we sometimes rest in what we did yesterday that was God honoring. Problem is, yesterday is gone, and today is here. Again, we cannot say that we know a few things so we can rest from all study. The devil lurks like a lion waiting on us to fall. We must be diligent to constantly be seeking to grow deeper in our faith. If King David can fall, so can we, if Peter, the apostle on whom Christ would build His church, can fail under threat of persecution then we had better not be so arrogant to think that we never will. So he encourages us all to keep growing in the “knowledge of God’s will” so that we may continue to honor God with our lives.

The word “walk” in verse 10 refers to our pattern of daily life and “worthy of the Lord” means in a manner that pleases Him. So Paul calls believers everywhere to daily live lives that give glory to God.

- Seek to be patient with people.
- Love people, do what is best for them.
- Walk in a spirit of humility.
- Share Christ with those we have the chance to impact.
- Be able to defend the Christian faith against teachings that do not line up with the Bible. “Apologetics and Worldviews class.”

And the more we seek to live this type of life the more we grow in our knowledge of God.

So Paul has issued a charge, not only to the Colossians but to believers throughout the ages, not to be content, rather:

1. *“Be filled with the knowledge of God’s will.”* So that
2. *“You may walk worthy of the Lord”*

He urges us not to be content with where we are! The times do not allow it. False-religions are everywhere, and if we are going to be a shining light on the campus and in this world then we must be rooted in the Scriptures, able to stand in the face of false teaching and give a defense of what the Bible teaches.

Finally, Paul asks that these Colossians, and us today, would be...

“strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might...” (vs. 11)

If we are going to stand, it will be by God’s strength and not our own. We must look at God’s strength as the power that will enable us to stand and live lives that honor Him. The good news is He supplies this strength to His children, so we should be...

“giving thanks to the Father” (v. 12)

It is God who has “*rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son He loves.*” (v. 13)

The teachings that have surrounded the Colossian church and us today are teachings that deny that Christ is sufficient to save. They add works to doctrine of salvation. You are saved by faith and works...so they say. But Paul says NO! Do not believe it! Root yourself in the Scriptures, because it is there that you find that you are saved by grace through faith in Christ. It is in Him and Him alone that we have “redemption and the forgiveness of sins.”

So as we read this passage, let us look where we are. Not unlike Colossae, there are all sorts of false teaching around this campus. So let us take Paul’s advice:

- Don’t be content with where we are in our faith, instead seek to grow, become rooted in the Scriptures so that:
- We may walk in a manner that gives praise and glory to God....
- Thanking Him for what He has done for us through His Son.