

Walking Worthy / Colossians 1:9-14 / Feb 27, 2022

Intro:

Good morning church, if you have a bible go ahead and turn to Colossians chapter 1.

As many of you know this past week Brad started some time off for rest and renewal that was discussed at our previous business meeting, and since he was almost finished with the book of Revelation me and Austin thought it best he finish that study.

So moving forward after this Sunday we will do a short series in the book of Jonah, then have a short series bringing us to Easter, then Brad will come and finish the book of Revelation.

This morning we will be looking at a passage from the Apostle Paul where he prays for the church at Colossae and gives us some insights as to how we can walk in a manner worthy of the Lord so that our lives can show other that we follow Jesus.

Before we jump in just to set the scene quickly.

We know Paul, The Apostle, and a great missionary, church planter writes this letter to the church at Colossae to encourage them and help them combat false teaching in their area that taught Jesus was not God or divine.

Verse 1-8 Paul mentions that he is thankful for them and how the gospel is coming to them and they have responded by repentance and faith in Jesus. Now they are sharing the gospel in their region.

Paul does not plant this church, but he has gotten a report about their gospel work and he writes to them.

It might also be helpful to know that verse 9-14 is all one long sentence in the original Greek.

Let's read.

Colossians 1:9–14 (CSB)

⁹For this reason also, since the day we heard this, we haven't stopped praying for you. We are asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding,

¹⁰so that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God,

¹¹being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, so that you may have great endurance and patience, joyfully

¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the saints' inheritance in the light.

¹³He has rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.

¹⁴In him we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Lets Pray.

Intro:

When I say the names Michael Jordan, Steve Jobs, Nolan Ryan, or George Patton, most of you in the room can automatically think of the thing they gave their lives to.

We think of Jordan and we know basketball, Steve Jobs and we think of technology and business success, we think of Nolan Ryan and think the best pitcher to ever play baseball, and lastly, we hear of General Patton and think of the man who gave his life for military strategy and success.

The question I want us to have in our minds as we walk through this passage this morning is: If someone called our name in a group of people who knew us what would they say we have given our lives for?

Could they say we have given our lives to following Jesus? Would they say we walked worthy of our Lord

I think the words the Lord has for us through the apostle Paul will give us some insight as to how we can live in such a way that others would see our walk, our pattern of life and say we gave our lives to following Jesus.

So the first thing we see from this passage is that verse 9 shows us that we need to **know Jesus.**

#1 Know Jesus v. 9 Verse 9 says,

For this reason also, since the day we heard this, we haven't stopped praying for you. We are asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding,

The phrase “for this reason also, since the day we heard this” reached back to the report Paul must have gotten regarding their belief in the good news of Jesus and their active obedience to share the good news with others in the region.

Paul is saying that since he has heard of them he has not stopped praying and he is praying for them to be filled with the knowledge of God’s will in two ways...

in wisdom and spiritual understanding.

One idea that is integral for us to see to grasp what Paul is saying here is what Paul means by his prayer.

What does he mean he wants them to have the knowledge of God’s will. We need to know what he means and what he doesn’t.

Paul is not so much hoping they understand God’s will for each of their individual lives, not that that is not important of course.

But what Paul is getting at is that he wants them to know God’s will that is fulfilled in Christ.

He wants them to be filled with the vast implications of the good news that Jesus has come to forgive sinners and redeem this broken world.

#1.A God’s will here is not individual but cosmic.

Paul wants them to begin the journey of understanding just how much Jesus changes everything in their life.

One commentator put it like this, “What Paul has in mind is not some particular or special direction for one’s life (as we often use the phrase “God’s will”), but a deep and abiding understanding of the revelation of Christ and all that he means for the universe (vv. 15–20) and for the Colossians.”¹

¹(Douglas J. Moo, The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon, The Pillar New Testament Commentary)

Paul wants them not only to see the story of Jesus as true, historical, and worthy of trust and belief, but that God became man and gave himself up for us and rose 3 days later changes our past, present, and future.

Paul wants this story of the good news to be rehearsed in our minds and hearts daily so that we are continually captivated by it and it changes us day by day.

Paul communicates this by saying he wants them to be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

#1.B Wisdom is in many ways applied knowledge.

A lot of people have knowledge about things but not everyone knows how to use that knowledge in the real world.

I can watch a lot of YouTube videos on how to build a house, or even read books on it, but that doesn't mean I can apply that knowledge and actually get a house built.

And in the same way, Paul wants them to know Jesus in a practical way. He wants them to understand how Jesus changes their day-to-day lives, he wants them to have that type of intimate knowledge of Jesus.

He wants them to get to a place where they see how the work of Jesus impacts everything in their life.

Then lastly he wants them to know God's will with spiritual understanding.

I think this simply means to allow the work of Jesus to begin to shift your understanding toward more spiritual matters.

For us to be aware of Satan and his desire to steal, kill, and destroy and for us to be awake to the spiritual warfare that is involved in a life devoted to Jesus.

Wedding Illustration

When I think of a story that changes everything for me even to this day it is the story of July 21, 2012.

On July 21, 2012, at Bethel Baptist Church east of Louisville, MS I got married to my bride Amber.

And I can sit up here and tell you about the little church we got married in or the great pictures we had or the time at the reception with all our friends.

I can have you watch the video of our ceremony and walk you through the decisions we made on what to wear and whatnot.

But I can also tell you how what happened on July 21, 2012, changed the last almost 10 years of my life.

I can tell you how it changed my week this past week, or how that day has implications for my day today.

In the same sense, the good news of Jesus needs to act the same way. There was a day that Jesus gave his life to pay for our sins and 3 days later he rose from the dead granting us freedom from sin and death and a promise to be with him forever.

And there was a day where you heard that story, turned from your sin, and believed.

That story, just like my wedding story should be one that has impacted your life since the day you believed up until today.

That is what it means for us to be filled with the knowledge of God's will in wisdom and Spiritual understanding.

Application

So how does knowing Jesus affect your marriage?

How does knowing Jesus affect how and where you work?

How does knowing Jesus affect how you raise your children?

How does knowing Jesus affect how you think about relationships with those around you?

How does knowing Jesus affect how you spend your time, talent, and treasure?

Knowing Jesus we:

- know unconditional love, so we can show his love to others.
- know forgiveness, and always seek restoration for relationships
- know acceptance, and don't seek for it in the sin of this world.
- know mercy, and do not live a life of arrogance and pride.
- sacrifice and live life focused towards others and not selfishly.
- purpose and won't find it in things that never satisfy.
- Knowing Jesus we know grace, and always offer a second chance.

Hopefully, as we grow in this knowledge of Jesus it will result in our entire lives being changed by him, which is what Paul points to in the next two verses when he calls us not only to know Jesus but also to follow him.

#2 Follow Jesus (10-12)

10so that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God, 11being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, so that you may have great endurance and patience, joyfully 12giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the saints' inheritance in the light.

In verses 10-12 Paul calls us not to just know Jesus but to also follow him by using the command "Walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him."

This command is the main verb in this phrase and Paul tells us how to pursue that using 4 participles.

Another way of saying it is that Paul calls us to do one main thing, walk worthy of the Lord, and he gives us 4 ways we can go about doing it with joy.

They are bearing fruit in every good work, growing in knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power, and giving thanks to the Father.

So Paul wants to use these four elements to show us how we can lead a life worthy of the Lord, and I think we will see how these four elements are compounded and one leads to the other.

First we need to see that the term walk does not literally mean to walk worthy of the Lord as if there is some special posture of walking that the Lord commands, but instead the scripture used this term to communicate the idea of a way of life, the conduct of life.

So Paul is calling the reader to have a way of life that is worthy of the Lord, a way of life that is pleasing to the Lord.

#2.A Bear Fruit in Good Works

The first way we are to do that is to bear fruit in every good work.

Bearing fruit in every good work is not Paul saying that we need to earn salvation, but instead he is saying if you are saved and have been changed by God then there should be a desire to do the things that delight God and honor him.

Ephesians chapter 2 verses 8-10 tells us, “For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift—not from works so that no one can boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.”

So after being redeemed through Christ, God wants to utilize us in his kingdom and in his mission and that looks like obeying God in good works that he puts before us.

Dallas Willard once said, “grace is not opposed to effort grace is opposed to earning.”

What he is getting at is that grace is not only given for God’s pardon of your sin, but it is also God’s power for you to do and do what God created you to be.

Our walk with Jesus is not passive because of grace, but empowered because of grace.

So we should work hard and seek out opportunities for good works and serve in them.

As we obey God in serving in these good works we will bear fruit in them. And I think of fruit in two different ways.

First are the fruits of the spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

There are good works God has planned for you, that if you obey him those good works will lead to those things being formed in you.

Fruit secondly is in the sense of more and more believers. The fruit of sharing the gospel and discipling others is more and more followers of Jesus.

So again, God has good works of disciple-making for us that will lead to bearing fruit in that way.

#2. B Grow in Knowledge

The next way we walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, is to grow in the knowledge of God. And I think growing in the knowledge of God is a result of bearing fruit in good works.

Paul knows that as these believers begin to step out in faith and obey God in the areas of their life doing good works they begin to bear fruit in the fruit of the spirit and fruit of more and more believers, their understanding of him will grow.

Paul is showing how knowledge and obedience work together.

As God calls them out of their comfort zone, maybe calling them to risk some things to obey God, they will find him faithful.

They will find him loving, they will find his presence there.

As we learn things about God, we obey him in the areas we know, then we discover more and more as we obey and serve him, and we grow in our knowledge of him.

Far too often we know more than we obey.

We become vessels of knowledge about God in a theoretical sense, but not in an intimate sense because we don't obey the things we know.

And Paul wants the Colossians to have heart understanding not just head understanding, and obedience to Christ makes the difference.

#2.C Being Strengthened

Thirdly, we walk in a manner worthy of the Lord by “being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, so that you may have great endurance and patience.”

And again, I think this element is tied to the previous two elements.

As the Colossians obey the Lord, step out and seek out good works, they will begin to bear fruit in those works, they grow in their intimate knowledge of God.

They begin to experience his faithfulness, his love, his grace, his power, and really begin to believe all the truths we mentally know about God, but haven't really seen or experienced.

And as they do that, they will be strengthened because they will have experienced his power and might.

So when trials come their way, or persecution is at their door they will know they serve and follow a powerful mighty Lord and savior and that will give them patience and endurance.

#2.D Giving Thanks

Then lastly, the last element of walking in a manner worthy of Christ is to “give thanks to the Father who gives us an inheritance in light with Him.”

And just like the others giving thanks is also connected to previous three.

As the Colossians are bearing fruit and doing good works, they experience their knowledge of God and grow in their understanding of him, this then produces strength leading to patience and endurance, and as they lean into Jesus to get to know him they give thanks joyfully that their powerful, mighty, loving, gracious Lord is with them.

So all these 4 elements work together to bring a disciple of Jesus to live a life worthy of our savior.

So if we want to have given our lives in following Jesus we will bear fruit as we do good works, and from those works we will grow in our knowledge of God,

and as we grow in our knowledge of God we will find strength in him to have endurance and patience,

and we will live a life of joyful thanksgiving to God our father.

This is how we pursue a life worthy of Jesus.

Chemistry Illustration

I can remember my first semester of college at Jones Junior College. For some reason I thought it would be a good idea to take college chemistry because at the time I was an engineering major. That was before I realized how much math was in engineering and realized I had to change my major.

Nonetheless, here I am as a freshman in college going to chemistry not doing so good, but the one main element that helped me pass the class was lab. So, we had class Tuesdays and Thursdays and lab Thursday afternoons. And many of you know how a lab-based class works. You spend time in the classroom working on the theory of the chemistry or biology, then you go to lab and test it out.

Lab was so helpful to me during that semester because I was able to see how the theory actually worked, I need to see it and experience it for me to fully grasp what was being taught.

And in a similar way that what I think Paul is getting at here in this passage.

There has to be a pattern of learning, obeying, and growing in understanding for us to really be strengthened in the Lord to have the patience and endurance we need to live in the world with joy as we pursue Christ.

We need to not just mentally know God's love, grace, and power, we need to see it in real life as we get out of our comfort zone and see how God works in the world we live in.

Application

So some of you here might feel that you aren't growing in your knowledge and understanding of God, or you aren't growing in your faith, trust, and confidence in God.

Some might say that you don't have the patience and endurance you think you need to follow Jesus well.

Others might simply say they aren't finding joy in life or have a posture of thanksgiving toward God.

And I think Paul is showing us that it all begins with being a part of good works that will bear fruit in your life.

There is just something about seeing and experiencing the things you know to be truth about God with your own eyes, and in a real-world sense understand how God is loving, gracious, and powerful.

And these good works can look like a host of different things.

It might mean you seek out needs in the children ministry or student ministry, how might you connect with them if there is a need.

It could be getting connected to the women's resource center and seeking how God might use you there.

It could be when the prisons open back up and let our church back in that you take a step of faith and come learn how-to-do-good works there.

It can look like getting with Taylor about going to Africa and seeing Zoe and serving there for a week, or getting with Jeff Killon to see what needs there are for the New Orleans ministry.

Whatever it looks like, we will need to be intentional to find places for good works and know they will most likely stretch us and call us out of our comfort zone, which is good because it makes us depend on God.

Then lastly we see in verses 13-14 for us to live a life worthy of our Lord we need to rest in Jesus.

#3 Rest In Jesus (13-14)

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

Paul ends this run on sentence with really a declaration of truth about what God the Father has done through God the Son.

In a way he is explaining in verses 13-14 how God the father has qualified us to share in this inheritance of the saints.

He begins with the spiritual reality that as believers the Colossians have been delivered from a domain of darkness into the kingdom of His Son, Jesus.

This phrase reminded me of 1 Peter 2:10 where Peter reminds the reader that, *"Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." He points to the truth that there was a time where you were oblivious to the work of Christ and what it mean for you, but now as believers you see full well how amazing it is that Christ has delivered us.*

Once we were blind but now we see, once we were deaf but now we hear, once we were lost and now we are found, once we were slaves and now we are free, once we were enemies but now we are sons and daughters, once we were dead and now we are alive.

We were without hope and purpose in the world and now we have a Savior and are a part of His kingdom.

But how has that transfer happened? How has this exchange been able to take place? Paul tells us in verse 14.

We are not made alive or sons and daughters of God because we have worked really hard and been good people or know all the right things about God, but because in Christ we have redemption, the forgiveness of sin.

In Christ we have redemption, which is an economic term.

It was used sometimes in the case of purchasing the freedom of a slave.

There might be an instance where someone had a large debt that needed to be paid back and if it became obvious that the debtor could not pay the amount back they would give themselves to servitude to pay back the debt in that way.

However, someone could redeem them from slavery if they could pay whatever the debt might be and this is what Jesus does for us.

Because of our sin and rebellion against God in wanting to be our own God we deserved to pay our own debt and be left in our lostness, in our blindness, and in our darkness and to be separated from God forever.

But instead, Jesus comes and pays for our rebellion by taking on all of God's wrath defeating sin and death and offering us forgiveness of that rebellion and gives us a new life with God by following Him.

We have never walked worthy of our Lord fully pleasing to the Father, but Jesus has and he offers his life to us. He redeems our life by giving us his if we will give up ours.

And having Jesus' life is worth giving up our lives.

Because of his redemption and forgiveness of sin applied to us by grace through faith we can rest in Jesus.

All the work that needs to be done to pay for our sin, brokenness, and rebellion has been accomplished.

We have nothing left to prove by the way of our salvation, Jesus has finished all the work, so we can rest.

The good works we do now as believers are so we can grow in our understanding of God and enjoy him.

We can fulfill what the Westminster Shorter Catechism says when it asks the question, what is the chief end of man? To glorify God and to enjoy him forever.²

Because of Christ's redemption and forgiveness, we can begin to enjoy God now, today, this week.

We have nothing to prove, we have no work to do to be saved. As Jesus has said it is finished. We can rest in Him.

As we wrap up our time in this passage we can know that to live a life worthy of our Lord Jesus we need to seek to know Him, follow him, and rest in Him.

² https://www.shortercatechism.com/resources/wsc/wsc_001.html

And if we live a life characterized that those three marks at the end of our lives we can look back on it and say we truly gave our lives to Jesus and one day we will see him face to face and he will call us home and tell us, “well done good and faithful servant.”³

Lets pray.

Every time we come to God’s word, I think God calls us to do or believe something, so we want to use this time of invitation for you to reflect on this passage in Colossians.

Maybe you need to spend some time in prayer in your seat, maybe you need to begin the steps of joining our faith family here, or maybe you have some questions about following Jesus. You can come now during this time or grab me or Austin after the service.

But let’s stand and sing and respond how the spirit leads.

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³ Matthew 25.