

Colossians Ch1v9-14 - A Praying Church

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning everyone, nice to see you.

And as always, look forward to chatting with you over tea and coffee. Please don't rush away. It's good to chat if you're able to stay.

Turn in your Bibles please to Colossians. This is the letter we're looking at together this term. Colossians chapter 1.

Last week we looked at chapter 1 verses 1 to 8 as we saw the beginning of this church and how he was thanking God for their faith in Christ Jesus and the love that they had for each other and the hope of heaven to come, this new community of believers.

And then this morning we're going to be looking at verses 9 to 14 which is a prayer, a prayer for the church.

[1 : 28] And as we go through this morning, at different points I'm going to turn what we've looked at a section at a time into a prayer.

And the prayer will be on the screen. You can verbally pray it out along with me if you want to or you can just pray quietly to the Lord.

But we're going to try and turn what we look at at different stages into prayer to make it practical and helpful.

So let's keep our Bibles open at Colossians 1 verses 9 to 14. I'm going to pray and then we'll look at his words together. Father, you have given to us all that we have.

There is nothing that we hold dear that is not a gift from you. Thank you for all that you have blessed us with.

[2 : 43] And we thank you that it is your desire to continue to give to your people and to your church all that we need as we walk the Christian life.

So Father, we come in our weakness, our helplessness. We come humbly before our great King and ask, give to us, your servants, what we need today.

Help us, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, if you could ask God for one thing and you knew you would receive it, what would you ask for?

If you could ask for one thing and you knew you would receive it, what would you ask for? Or suppose somebody comes up to you over tea and coffee and they say to you, Will you pray for me?

Pray for me this week. What would you ask that person to pray for you? Those are good questions to ask because the answer to those questions reveal what is most valuable to us and what is most important to us.

[4 : 14] How we answer those questions reveal what's most important to us. So what would you ask God for? Would it be for an increase in your salary at work?

Would it be for better health? Would it be for a husband or a wife? Maybe to pass your exams or win your match?

Or what would you pray for? Well, in our text this morning, verses 9 to 14, the Apostle Paul writes what he is praying for these people.

Verse 9. For this reason. So he has been giving thanks for their salvation in Christ, their new beginning. So for this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you.

Well, we know he prays. He does so in his other letters. But what does he pray for? Well, surprisingly, he doesn't pray and ask, Lord, make it less stressful for these people.

[5 : 26] Or, Lord, give them an easier life so that they're not tired anymore. He doesn't even ask for better health or greater prosperity.

Paul prays not what we want, but what we most need. What we most need. His prayer shapes how we as a church family can pray for one another.

The things that we most need. There's three things that form our prayer for one another and for the church.

We pray that we would be filled by God, strengthened with power, and it to be received in thanks. So something to be filled by, something to be strengthened with, and something to be received.

So let's look at each of these in turn. First is a prayer to be filled by God. Look at the rest of verse 9.

[6 : 36] We continually ask God to fill you, fill you with what? With the knowledge of his will.

That's the prayer. Lord, fill me with the knowledge of your will. Now, knowing God's will is important to us. In fact, it's something that kind of strikes a chord with us, because we think of God's will in terms of our future, don't we?

We say things like, it's God's will for me to move to Paris. It's God's will that I should marry you.

It's God's will that I should work here. It sounds very spiritual, doesn't it, when we attach things that we desire with God's will.

But I think what we're really expressing is our own personal choices. You see, God's will is not complex.

[7 : 41] It's not something hidden that we have to discover. It's not some kind of packaged personal plan that God has, that we somehow have to prise open his hands to get what God's will is for my life.

No, God's will has actually been revealed to us all. God's will is what God wants and what God desires.

God's will is God's priority for our lives and for this world. So you're asking the question, as am I, well, how do we know what that will is?

What is it that God wants and God's desire? Well, the primary way of knowing what God's will is, is by the Spirit through Scripture.

By the Spirit through Scripture. You see, God's will is revealed to us in the pages of Scripture. The book that you have open in your hands there now is the primary and fundamental things that we need to know for our life and for this world.

[8 : 54] That's how God communicates. It's how God speaks to us. It's how we hear God's voice. If you want to be filled with God's desire and God's priorities, if you want a knowledge of his will, well, see this book, open it up and read it.

Let me show you God's revealed will for your life. Have a look at chapter 1, verse 28. This is God's will.

We're reading Scripture, God's word. This is what it says, chapter 1, verse 28. He, that is Christ, is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.

That's God's will for your life, that you would become mature in Christ, that you would grow in Christ-likeness. Let me show you another one.

Chapter 2, verse 2. Again, he's speaking of the church. You see, that's God's will for us, that together as a church we would be united together in love for Jesus and love for one another.

[10 : 27] You see, God's will isn't very complex, is it? It's really quite simple. We just open up the Bible and read. That's God's will for your life.

But, to see that will applied to our lives, and to see our priorities change, and our desires to match up with God's desires, we need the help of the Spirit.

Look at the rest of verse 9. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives.

You see, the Spirit gives us wisdom and understanding to apply God's revealed will to our lives.

As we read the Bible, we're learning what God's will is, we're being filled with his knowledge, and the Spirit is at work within us, giving us wisdom and understanding to apply all of that word to our lives and to our day-to-day situations.

[11 : 40] And so, our first prayer, you can follow on the screen. Father God, as we read your word, fill us with a knowledge of what you want and you desire, and by your Spirit, give us wisdom and understanding to apply your truth to our lives.

Amen. So, we ask God to fill us, and there's a reason, there's a big reason why we need to be filled with God's knowledge and for the Spirit to be at work in us, so that we might please God.

Let's look at the end of verse 9. We'll read that into verse 10. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way.

So, you see that little phrase, to live a life worthy of God? Well, that's to live a life that pleases God. If you want to live a life that's worthy to God, it means to live a life that pleases God.

And how we please him is further explained in verse 10. Bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God.

[13 : 18] Bearing fruit and growing. That's what it is to please God. In fact, as we read through Colossians, we're shown what some of this fruit looks like.

The kind of things that we should be doing if we're to please God. So, just for example, have a look at chapter 3, verse 5. I wonder what you have in your mind when you think of bearing fruit in every good work.

Something to please God. Well, here it is. Some examples. Chapter 3, verse 5. Here's a good fruit. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature.

Sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed, which is idolatry. That's a lovely fruit, isn't it?

Fight sin. Put it to death. Or another one, verse 13. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone.

[14 : 37] You've got a grievance against someone here today? Maybe your spouse, maybe your children, maybe a neighbour. I don't know.

Do we forgive them? It's a beautiful fruit. Or verse 16. Let the message, or the word of God, the message of Christ, dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

That's another lovely fruit. That's what we were practising. That was some of the good work we were doing as we gathered this morning. We were singing songs. Why? Because as we sing, we're not singing just to God.

We're singing to each other and we're teaching and we're admonishing and reminding each other of who God is, that he is good, that he's paid it all, and that we have access to a God in heaven.

These are the kinds of fruits that are to be in display in our lives. They're attractive and beautiful. It is pleasing to God. But we're not just to bear fruit.

[16 : 00] We're also, verse 10, to grow in knowledge. And this growing in knowledge is not just to kind of puff our heads up and fill as much theology as we possibly can and just cram it in so we've got this big theological head that's so big and so deep.

That's good. But it's really about putting it into practice. Growing in knowledge is obeying God's will for my life.

You see, that's the way we please God, is hearing his word and doing it. And so, to our second prayer, we pray, Father, fill us with a knowledge of your will so that we might live a fruitful life, putting sin to death, loving each other, and encouraging one another with the word of Christ so that we please you.

Amen. Now that's a great prayer, isn't it? To be filled by God and given his spirit so that we can please him in our life.

But how are we going to do it? Because all of that fruit and all of that knowledge is difficult. So here's the second part of the prayer. A prayer to be strengthened with power.

[17 : 28] You see, without God, there can be no spiritual fruit. There can be no growing. There can be no obedience. There can be no pleasing God.

So we come to God humbly, admitting our weakness and helplessness, and ask him that he would strengthen us by his power. So look at verse 11.

being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might. What a great prayer.

To be strengthened with all power according to his glorious might. Now that power, the power we're talking about here, is nothing less than God's creation resurrection power.

Let's look at what scripture says. I've got these verses on the screen. Here's the first one, which talks about God's creation power. Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm.

[18 : 41] Immense power, isn't it? To bring the universe into existence and to hold it all together. God's power, God's power, God's power, God's power, God's power, God's power, God's power, is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the heavenly realms.

Isn't that an extraordinary power? The power that raised Jesus from the dead and put him into the heavenly realms, ruling over all people and all things.

That power is available for you and for me. The power that brought the universe into existence, the power that raised Christ, his glorious might is at work within us.

Verse 11, being strengthened with how much power? All power.

This is God's full and complete, unlimited and eternal power. You see, what God asks of us to please him in every way, oh, it's so difficult, isn't it?

[20 : 04] But he makes it all possible by giving to us his glorious might. One writer put it like this, we are strengthened by God with the greatest strength imaginable.

And so we pray again, Father God, help us to see our weakness and our helplessness.

We come to you asking that you will strengthen us with your power so that we might obey your will. Now this being strengthened with power is filled out in a purpose and a reason why we need this power.

And here it is, so that you and I can keep on going. That we'll keep on persevering in the Christian life.

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

[21 : 18] The Christian life, it's difficult, isn't it? It's tough. And to enable us to keep going, to keep walking and following Jesus, we're given his power.

And this is seen in two ways. When we receive his power, look at verse 11, the end of verse 11, we have great endurance and patience. Because that's what the Christian life requires, endurance.

It's not a sprint. It's a marathon. We don't just receive Christ, we continue with Christ. And that's hard for us as we go to work or as we go to our school, as we live our life out.

There are all kinds of pressures which are pushing in upon us to conform not to God's will but to the world's will. That I would seek my will rather than God's will.

That I would follow my desires rather than submit to God's desires. That's always crushing in on us. And so we ask to be strengthened with his power so that we will endure.

[22 : 31] And the Christian life also requires patience. We want everything now. We're an instantaneous culture. We want our struggles to end now.

Trials to be over now. We want all of heaven and the joy of heaven now. Well, longing for heaven is good.

I hope you are longing for it. But we've got to learn patience. It's coming. Verse 5 tells us that. Doesn't it? Have a look back up at verse 5.

He's been talking about their faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven about which you've already heard in the true message of the gospel.

For God's children we're looking forward where there will be no struggles and there will be no trials. But we've got to learn patience.

[23 : 36] It is coming. And so we pray for power and strength to be faithfully following and to do that patiently.

And so we pray again how good it is to pray because as we pray God gives. Here's the prayer. Father God strengthen us with your glorious might the power that brought the universe into existence and the power that raised Christ from the dead so that we will endure in the face of trials and have patience while we wait for heaven.

Amen. What a great prayer. So we ask God to fill us. We ask to be strengthened with power.

But are you sure God is going to give you what you need? Are you sure that God our Father will give you all that we've been praying for this morning?

Well, I think we can be. A prayer to be received in thanks. Look at verse 12. He's been praying for different things and then he kind of changes tack and he bursts into a prayer of thanksgiving.

[25 : 05] Verse 12. And giving joyful thanks to the Father. Why? Because he has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.

What's the greatest gift you could possibly have? What do you dream of if you were to receive a gift? Well, if you are a Christian, you have the greatest gift that you could possibly ever imagine.

You have the gift that trumps every other gift imaginable. Did you see it there in verse 12? You share in the inheritance of his holy people.

people. That inheritance is something we have now and it will be experienced in all its fullness to come. So what will it be like?

What is this inheritance going to look like? Well, it's described in the same verse as the kingdom of light. That is a kingdom ruled by God where there is no darkness, no sin, no evil, no wickedness, no suffering, no sickness.

[26 : 32] It will be a life with Christ for all eternity who will continue to fill us with joy and peace never ending. It will be our forever home marked by beauty and harmony.

This is God's gift to you. can you think of a better gift you could possibly have? This is your inheritance.

This is what is written for you in God's will. Now to share in this inheritance we have to qualify don't we?

So what does that mean for me? Do I have to achieve some certain standard of holiness to kind of somehow get into the holy joe club? Do I have to somehow prove myself to God that he will accept me?

What is it I have to do to qualify for this amazing inheritance? What do you have to do? Nothing except receive it in faith.

[27 : 49] Look at verse 12. Who's qualified you? The Father who has qualified you. The Father qualifies us.

It's not what we do but what God has done for us. He tells us what he's done for us. Verse 13 He has rescued God has rescued He's rescued us from the dominion the rule of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves.

Transferred from a kingdom of darkness into a kingdom of light a kingdom of love with His Son in whom we have redemption set free from our past our guilt and shame and receiving the forgiveness of sins.

You see we were lost in a kingdom of darkness empty and hopeless bound to the ruler of this dark kingdom Satan himself enslaved to a life of sin.

There was no way for us to escape or get out of this dark kingdom. in fact the Bible tells us that we even had no desire to escape. But God takes the initiative and God comes and intervenes into our life through His Son and He rescues us.

[29 : 24] He makes a way so we can escape and enter into a kingdom of light. Enter into the kingdom of the Son He loves.

He takes us from our self-destructive hell-bound life and gives us a glorious inheritance. We receive it in thanks.

And so we pray again. Father God we thank you that you have qualified us to share in your glorious inheritance.

Thank you for rescuing and redeeming us and forgiving us of all our sin. We receive your gift with joyful thanks.

Isn't that amazing? Which helps us to see that as we come in thanksgiving it leads to a humble confidence.

[30 : 31] We receive in thanks thanks so that we can ask confidently. You see he's not just stopping asking God and then suddenly going into a prayer of thanks.

I think it's a prayer of thanks to help us see that we can ask God confidently. You see think of it this way. If God has given us the greatest gift ever being qualified to share in his inheritance how much more will he give to us all that we need as we wait for our inheritance.

If our inheritance is guaranteed, it's stored up, it's coming, you will receive it, how much more will he give us everything we need while we're waiting?

Or think of it this way, if God gave us the greatest gift for which we never asked or desired, but he gave it to you, how much more will he give what we do need when we humbly ask?

If he gave you the greatest gift and you never asked for it, how much more will he give you what you need today and tomorrow because we humbly ask?

[31 : 57] you see sometimes we view God like some kind of magic genie, a God who we have to desperately try and please and with some kind of magic prayer formula, we prize out of God's hands the things that we want.

Repetition, same prayer over and over again. No, God isn't like that. God is a generous Father who always gives to us what is best.

He's not tight-fisted or mean-hearted. Just have a look back at the end of verse 2, chapter 1, the last part of verse 2. This shows us how generous our Father is.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father. These are the gifts he gives to his children, grace and peace and all that we need as we wait our inheritance.

So we come in humble confidence knowing that he will always give what is right and best. So we pray. Father, we humbly ask that you will give to us all we need as we live the Christian life.

[33 : 18] Please fill us with the knowledge of your will, strengthen us with all power so that we please you in all things. We receive these gifts in thanks.

What a tremendous prayer. But you know what? This is a prayer we pray as a church. These aren't just individual prayers.

Look back at verse 9 there with me. He says, we have not stopped praying for you. Paul is praying on behalf of the church.

He is interceding on behalf of these people. So this is a prayer. What we've been looking at is our encouragement to pray this prayer for one another.

So think of it like this. Imagine you're on a plane going off to, because it's God's will, Paris. Just imagine.

[34 : 20] You're on a plane and suddenly you experience a loss of cabin pressure. Immediately those oxygen masks just pop down. And if you're sitting beside someone who can't manage a younger person or for whatever reason they can't put it on, it's your responsibility to put that mask on them so that they can breathe.

Well, aren't there times when we are so overwhelmed with the pressures of life. Trials, struggles, and it feels like we've run out of oxygen, we're choking, we're suffocating, we can't cope, we can't even pray.

So we go to someone and we say, will you pray for me? will you pray on my behalf? What a great request that we are a family, brothers and sisters, who can pray for each other so that we can ask God, our generous Father, to give to our brothers and sisters all that we need.

Fill them with the knowledge of your will, strengthen them with your faith, and give them a renewed confidence that they too can ask and they will receive.

Your prayers for each other will help them breathe again. This week, we're going to gather as a church family.

[36 : 04] In your notice sheet at the back of it, you'll see the timetable there, or if you've got the book, as Ralph was pointing out, the different occasions we can gather to pray.

And my encouragement to you, as it is to myself, we're not saying you'll be there at every prayer event, but just highlight it, mark it off, plan.

If you don't plan, it's not going to happen. Come along if you can't be there at the exact time, just come soon after. Come when you can, leave when you have to. If you're there for 10 minutes, 15 minutes, that's fine.

Come when you can, leave when you have to. And if you find praying difficult, and you're not always sure what to pray for, so we'll be using these prayers as a guide, to be praying for the areas of the life of the church, the community in which we're in, and our mission partners.

others. So, let's use this to pray for one another, to pray and ask God that he will give to us all that we need as we live the Christian life.

[37 : 22] Well, before we sing, let's pray together. our Father God, thank you that you are generous and exceedingly good, and that you always and only give the very best gifts to your children.

Thank you for the gift of prayer, that we can come and talk to you as we are now, and ask you that the power you used to bring this world into being, the power that raised Christ from the dead and defeated death and gives life, that we might have that power so that we would please you in every way.

encourage us to be people of prayer for our church family, especially for those who are not able to pray or are going through trials.

May we pray on their behalf, knowing that you will give. Thank you, Father, for teaching us today.

Amen. Well, we're going to sing. What a friend we have in Jesus.

[39 : 07] He's with us and for us, not against us. All our sins we can bring and he will forgive.
take fire and the