

Life In The Lord - Colossians 1:9-14

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 23 June 2019

Preacher: Alan Giles

[0 : 00] If you have one of the red Bibles, that's going to be page 1182. And I'm going to read Colossians 1, verses 9 through 14.

And then I'll pray real quick and we'll get going from there. Colossians 1, starting in verse 9, and we'll go through 14. For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you.

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, bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might, so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the truth that it is. We ask, Lord, now that you would open our eyes that we would see, that you would open our ears that we would hear.

[1 : 27] Lord, would you soften the soil of our hearts, and would you sow your gospel deeply into our souls. Remind us again of how great you are, how far we have fallen, and yet the good news we have in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord, it's in his name we pray. Amen. Well, to start with this morning, I just want to do a quick recap of where we've been so far in Colossians.

This is our third Sunday in Colossians, and so far we've just seen a few of the following truths, okay? Verses 1 through 8, we saw that this is from Paul and Timothy, that they are together writing this book.

Probably Paul is speaking in Timothy's writing, or something along those lines, but they're the authors. And then they're writing to a people in a city called Colossae, a church in Colossae, that they became this church, God's people, by the will of God, as a man named Epaphras came and proclaimed the gospel.

They heard the gospel, they believed the gospel, and by grace, through faith, they became God's people, and yet are still in this city of Colossae. In short, Paul has identified, essentially who he's writing to, and who they are in Christ.

[2 : 41] We heard two beautiful stories this morning, of someone becoming a new creation, a new person in Christ. And these are the same, they're a new creation, they're new people, gathered together as Christ's body, the church, in the city of Colossae.

Okay, now in today's passage, what Paul's going to do, he's going to point out, that since they are now in Christ, they are a new people, who live under a new Lord, namely Lord Jesus.

And that life under Lord Jesus, is different, than life under any other Lord. So today's main idea, as we have it, is just that, the Christian life, is a new life, under a new Lord.

If you could put Christian life, in a nutshell, that's what it is. It's a new life, under a new Lord. And we'll look at the reality, of what that means, to live a new life, under a new Lord. The way to live a life, that brings joy to our Lord.

We might not think about that, very often. But there's a way to live life, that brings joy to our Lord. And then the joy of a life, lived in the Lord. It's okay to be joyful in the Lord.

[3 : 43] In fact, scripture says, we can and should be joyful, in the Lord. So we'll look at that as well. But first, the reality of our new lives, lived under our new Lord. And here's how Paul puts it, in verse 9, through just the first part, of verse 10.

He says, for this reason, and we can pause and say, well, what's the reason? And he would say, everything I've covered so far, in verses 1 through 8. Because we are God's people, because we became His people, by grace, through faith, for this reason, since the day, Paul and Timothy, heard about the church, in Colossae, they've not stopped, praying for them.

He says, 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, this is why they pray, so that you may live a life, worthy of the Lord, and please Him, in every way.

And he just said, the reality of the Christian life, is that it is a life, lived under a new Lord. And it's important for us, to just pause here, and get an idea, of how a Colossian, would have heard this phrase, in the first century.

This is very specific language, Paul just used. Okay, in Colossae, in the first century, the ideas of life, land, and lordship, are completely bound together.

[5 : 07] They're inseparable. You lived life, on a land, under a Lord, you could call Him, Master, Landowner, King, whatever the term might be, in your area, in the world, but that it was the Lord, of the land.

And so I think we have a map, so Colossae, there's a couple important things, to note about it. It's a small town. It's 200 kilometers, inland, from Ephesus, which is on the Mediterranean Sea.

Can you see it okay? It's kind of zoomed in, up there for you. Alright, that 200 kilometers, is important to note, because, here's what Rome, is interested in. Rome wants your money.

Can you believe that? That government wants your money. Rome wants people's money. And how do they get people's money? Well, you provide some sort of good. And in Colossae, the goods are food, and wool, from the sheep.

So they're farmers, and they're shepherds. They then, send their goods, 200 kilometers, to the Mediterranean Sea, probably at the city of Ephesus. And that's the maximum, Rome's willing to really accept, any goods over land.

[6 : 13] 200 kilometers. After that, they're not going to bother. It's too expensive, and it's too risky, even with their roads, to bring your goods, much more than 200 kilometers. So Colossae is right at the edge, of the Roman Empire.

And then from there, once it gets to Ephesus, it's going to be brought, by the Mediterranean Sea, into Rome, or into other cities, where all those goods, are exchanged for money. All that money gets taxed.

All that tax goes to Rome. Rome's happy. So if you're a Colossian, your job is to make food, and wool. Send that wool to Ephesus. That stuff gets turned into money.

That money goes to Rome. Rome's happy. You want to keep Rome happy, during that time. Okay? And, and the difference, between being a farmer then, and being a farmer now, is actually quite striking.

I talked to a number of people this week, who either owned farms, or had parents that owned farms, and, and I asked them the same question. Do you get to grow, or do your parents get to grow, what they want to on their land?

[7 : 13] Or does somebody tell them what to grow? And all of them said, well, they could do what they want with their land. That wasn't the case in the first century. You didn't own the land you worked, and you didn't get to choose, what it was you grew.

You lived under a Lord. And the Lord of the land, he decided what you would grow. Alright, so you didn't own the land, the Lord of the land did.

You didn't choose your crops, the Lord of the land chose the crops. You might not even choose the methods, by which you grew those crops, the Lord of the land would choose the methods, by which you grew the crops on his land.

You were not your own person, and you'll hear this echo in scripture, you belong to the Lord of the land. Your happiness was directly linked, to your Lord's satisfaction with you.

That's important to understand. For Colossians, your happiness was directly linked, to your Lord's satisfaction with you. You live life on a land under a Lord.

[8 : 18] There was really no way around. And your Lord probably didn't even live there. The Lord of the land, the owner of the land, probably lived in the city. We have writings from first century, a guy named Pliny the Younger.

He writes a ton of letters, and in a lot of those letters, he's writing to someone who works lands that he owns. And he says, make sure you grow these things, make sure you sell them for these prices, make sure this, make sure that.

He's nowhere near those lands, but he's giving the instructions, giving the orders, and they're expected to do what he says, because he's the Lord of the land. So with that in mind, let's look at Colossians 1, verses 9 and the first part of 10 again, so that we can hear it the way the Colossians would have heard this.

For this reason, because they're under a new Lord. Since the day we heard about you, we've not stopped praying for you. We ask God to fill you with the knowledge of His will, or in other words, we want God to explain to you what your Lord desires.

Through all the wisdom and understanding that His Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord, and please Him in every way.

[9 : 28] Okay, again, in the Colossian world, your happiness is directly linked to your Lord's satisfaction with you. So Paul's not writing anything foreign to them. He's saying we're asking that the Lord would reveal His will to you, and that you could please Him.

As you live out His will for you. Right, so what does that mean for a Christian? Well, it means we should come to know the will of God, our Lord, so that we can bring Him joy, and enjoy life in Him.

And if you think about the Colossian again, how would you know? How would you know how to please the Lord? You'd have kind of two options. You could guess, and then you're just hit or miss, right?

You could say, well, I think, I don't know, I know a couple things about this Lord. I'll just pick some crops, I'll grow them, I'll hope to get a decent price, and then when He returns, hopefully He's happy with me.

That's one option. The other option is, you would just simply ask Him, what's your will? What is it you want done on your land? What do you want me to do? How can I please you?

[10 : 37] Reveal your will to me, so I can please you, so that I can continue under your Lordship. It was good to be under somebody's Lordship then. It meant you had a place to live. It meant you had food. You would want to please your Lord.

So for the Christian, the reality is, the Lord has done just that for us. Right, He's given us His revealed will, right here in Scripture. And that's what Paul's pointing out to this young church.

The Lord has given you His will. He's showing you, He's telling you through His Word, how He wants you to live life under His Lordship, so that you can please Him in His life.

Essentially, he says, we've got to know the Word of God. We've got to know His will. Which leads us into our second point, which is that the way to live a life that brings joy to our Lord.

There is a way to live life that brings joy to our Lord. Sometimes I think we just think God's like this big angry being up in the sky that we can never please.

[11 : 41] But He says in His Word, there is a way to live life under His Lordship that is pleasing to Him. And Paul starts to bring this out now in the second half of verse 10.

Again, he says, we want you to live a life worthy of the Lord and please Him in every way, bearing fruit in every good work, and growing in the knowledge of God.

Okay? And I would encourage you to write the word while before growing in the knowledge of God. Because these are all going to start to go together. Bearing fruit in every good work while growing in the knowledge of God.

Alright? In my head, I just say new things to know, new crops to grow. That's how I put it in my head. It makes simple sense to me that way. If we've got a new Lord, if we've got someone else in charge, if you've got a new boss, new things to know, new crops to grow.

Okay? For the Christian, there's new things to know. And then the knowledge of these things leads us into doing God's work. So we'll take them one at a time here. First, new things to know, or as Paul says, growing in the knowledge of God.

[12 : 42] We are to be, as Christians, growing in the knowledge of God. I think we heard that from both of our ladies today. They're growing in the knowledge of God. That's what we're called to do.

There's an interesting book in the United States. I don't know if it's come out here. It's called, All I Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten. Which I think you would call junior infancy, or first year, or something like that, right?

Am I close? All I Needed to Know I Really Just Learned When I Was Five or Six Years Old. And it's cute. It's a cute book. It's a clever book. But think about the message there for a minute. All I Really Need to Know to Please the Lords of this World, I Learned at the Age of Five or Six, and I Can Just Kind of Stop Knowing Things Now.

And again, it's cute. It's clever. But we really do live in a postmodern world that says, I Can Just Kind of Do Whatever I Want Regardless of what the Lord Wants. We live in a world that says, We Don't Really Need to Know What God Has Said.

In fact, historically, we've gone as a people from What Has God Said to Has God Actually Said Anything to Who Cares?

[13 : 52] I'll Just Do Whatever I Want. That's been the progression of humanity from one country to another over and over again. What Has God Said? Has He Actually Said Anything?

And then eventually just Who Cares? I'll Do What I Want. Maybe I Don't Need to Grow in Knowledge of God. John Calvin once wrote, he said, Faith does not rest on ignorance, but on knowledge.

And indeed, knowledge of God and His Divine Will. And then when Paul says, of God, he's expressing the realm which one is expected to find this growth in.

Paul doesn't say, my prayer is that you would grow in knowledge of new farming methods. It's a good thing. That's not Paul's prayer. He doesn't say, my prayer is that you would grow in knowledge of all the other gods that everybody talks about.

That's not Paul's prayer. He says, his prayer is that they would grow in knowledge of God. And if I can just be candid with you, if I can just be frank, at least coming from the U.S., the Bible is not as central a part of most believers' lives as it should be.

[15 : 07] Where I'm from, where I live, it's just not as central a part of most believers' lives as it should be. World Religion News ran an article two years ago concerning the United States in which they said, 87% of United States homes have a Bible in them.

That's a staggering number. Historically, that is amazing. In Paul's day, 10% of people could read. In our day, in the country that I come from, 87% of people have a Bible in their home.

The revealed will of the Lord of the universe is in their home. And yet, in the United States, two-thirds of Americans do not read their Bible.

really, ever. In the United States, you could go into a hundred homes and see at least 87 Bibles.

And yet, the majority of people have no idea what the will of the Lord is for their life. And I'll tell you, the results in the United States have been a spiritual disaster.

[16 : 23] It's been utterly terrible. And you would think, if we could just get the will of the Lord in people's hands, if they could just grow in knowledge of what God wants, but the sad thing is, it's there.

It's in their hands. And we don't take the time to open it up and say, what has God said? What has the God of the universe said?

Practically, I'll give you two ideas for how to get to know God better. Okay? And this is very creative. You ready? Read the Bible alone and read the Bible with others. It's about as creative as I can get.

I'm sorry. And we heard it from Helen this morning. I read the Bible alone and I read the Bible with others. Those two things right there, that's what Paul's talking about.

Growing in the knowledge of God. Pick a passage a day, work through a book of the Bible at a time. One passage a day, one chapter a day. You can have an audio Bible on your phone, on your computer.

[17 : 24] I like to go for a walk and just listen to books of the Bible. One of my favorites is a chronological Bible. If you want one of those, I'll help you find one. It takes the Bible, which sometimes historically can seem confusing because the stories overlap, and it just lays it out in one story.

So you can follow along in one story. That's my favorite way to read the Bible. Just read through the story of Scripture. But read the Bible alone. Don't be like the majority of Americans with God's will sitting right in your house and never open it up.

Read the Bible alone. And then read the Bible with others. We have plenty of options right here. You're here this morning. Excellent. That's a great place to start. We read the Bible in the Psalms.

You see the Bible. You hear the Bible. You're going to see the results of the work done in the Bible when we take the Lord's Supper. We hear the preaching of God's Word. We're in the Bible with others. That's an excellent thing. If you're not a member of this church, if you don't live here, make sure you go to a church that teaches the Bible weekly.

That's very important. If you live here, keep coming every Sunday and just hear the Bible. Read the Bible with others. We have home groups and Bible studies. I think ladies Bible study Thursday morning and then home groups Wednesday evenings.

[18 : 34] Read the Bible with others. It's okay if you don't know much. Not many Christians really knew much about the Bible when they first started reading it. We've got to read the Bible. Read it alone and read it with others.

If you're new to Christianity, if you pick up a Bible and you go, it doesn't make much sense to me, that's absolutely fine. It takes time. I think Helen said that too. It took time.

It took reading it. It took getting to know God's Word, right? You don't learn a new boss in one hour. It takes time. It takes time. And we're happy to do that with you.

If the Bible's new to you, tell us. We'll sit with you. We'll read it with you. We'll get you in a group. We'll teach you how to read the Bible. But we have to grow in the knowledge of God. Because growing in the knowledge of God leads to doing good works.

Paul says, we should be bearing fruit in every good work. Right? There's a growing trend, at least where I come from, that says, we don't really have to do anything as Christians. Hooray!

[19 : 35] We're free. We're saved. We've got our fire insurance. And now we just, I don't know, live out some 30, 40 years, make the best of what we've got, and then we die, and then we go to heaven, and then everything's great.

But Paul says, no, we're supposed to be bearing fruit in every good work. There is work for Christians to do. There's work for us under our Lord.

Paul says in Ephesians 2, he says, we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus, our Lord, to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Sometimes we just need to pause and remember that. God created good works for us to do under his Lordship. I'll give you some more just practical examples here of good works.

Sometimes this is a tough one. We'll make it real simple. All right? Doing a good work can be going to work. Have you ever thought about that? You're literally working.

[20 : 40] Check. You can do it well, and you can do it unto the Lord. You say, how can I please the Lord? Well, you can get up tomorrow morning, and you can go to work. You can do the best job you can do.

I'm sure all of us have worked with really good co-workers, and I'm sure some of us have worked with terrible co-workers, and there's a difference, isn't there? We want to be the type of people that when we go to work, we do a good work.

We do it unto the Lord. We're working patiently. We're kind. We're gentle. We're loving with others. That's a simple good work. Parenting can be a bit of a challenge at times.

You can be a really good parent, and you can be a terrible parent. There is a difference. God would say, I've blessed you with children. Now be a good parent unto the Lord. You can serve.

I would challenge you, one of the ways to just serve in your local church, one Sunday kind of a service, and then one midweek kind of a service. That's a great starting point. There's worship team, set up, set down.

[21 : 44] All right? We would say tear down. Set down. We're more violent, I guess. Set down sounds so much more polite. Set up, set down. The children's ministries, there's all kinds of ways to serve.

Just get on one of those teams. Get in one of those rotations. Once or twice a month, just be serving on Sunday. And then during the week, there's all kinds of ministries. I know they're dialing back for the summer, so start praying now about how can I serve when all the ministries start up in September.

I'll tell you, we saw Polo this week. Parents of Little Ones, it's phenomenal. I've seen a lot of churches in a lot of places. It's one of the best ministries I've seen a church do.

It's excellent. Pray about joining that. Pray about just sitting and talking with young ladies, with people who have children. Think about just playing with the children. Those are good works, good things to do.

So there's plenty for us to do right here in this church, in this city, for the Lord. And a lot of it doesn't take a ton of training. Paul would say, we've got to read the Bible alone, read the Bible together, and then growing in our knowledge of God, bear fruit in every good work.

[22 : 53] Let's not be the people that Jesus is speaking to and He says, why do you call me Lord, Lord, and not do what I say? Nobody wants the Lord of the land to return and say, what have you been doing?

You haven't done what I've said. There's a way to live life that brings joy to the Lord. And then the question becomes, how do we actually go about pulling this off?

It should feel a little heavy right now. Does it feel a little, oh, God's called me to do some stuff. It should feel a bit weighty. And Paul just called us to live a life worthy of God Almighty and please the Lord.

And when I think about it, I think, Paul, if we were able to do this, we wouldn't have needed Jesus to come in the first place. If we were really able to just grow in the knowledge of God, if we were truly able to serve You the way that You wanted to be served, then we could have pulled this off without Christ.

The reality is we haven't been able to do it on our own. Which is why I love what Paul does next. He's going to pick it up in verse 11. He's going to remind us that it's God who gives us the ability to do what He's called us to do.

[24 : 26] See, he says, bearing fruit in every good work, while growing in the knowledge of God, and then I'd encourage you to add the word while again, while being strengthened with all power according to His, that is, God's glorious might, so that you may have great endurance and patience while giving joyful thanks.

This is where the Gospel starts to change things. This is the joy of a life lived in our Lord. Because look what else Paul adds to this in verses 12-14.

He says, the Father has qualified you to share in the inheritance of His holy people in the kingdom of light. For He, that is, God, has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

I want you to take notice here of who has taken the action in all of these verbs. There's five verbs right here. The Father has qualified us. That's God's work. The Father has rescued us.

That's God's work. The Father has brought, or you could say, transferred us into the kingdom of the Son. That's God's work. The Son in whom we have redemption, that's God's gift to us. In the Son we have forgiveness of sins.

[25 : 41] Again, that's God's gift to us. It's all God's work and all God's gift to us. This is why Paul can say in verse 11, while being strengthened, because it's God's work.

With all power, that is, God's power, according to His glorious might, so that we may have great endurance and patience while giving joyful thanks to the Father.

And we say, why would we give joyful thanks to the Father? Because it's all from Him. Christianity is not a do-it-yourself religion. Christianity is not make yourself as good as you can be and hope that that's enough for God.

It's belonging to God because of God and being kept by God through the power of God. It's the joy of a life lived in our Lord.

Paul doesn't say strengthen yourselves. He says, being strengthened because it's our Lord who strengthens us. He doesn't say, be strengthened with some power. He says, be strengthened with all power.

[26 : 41] And you say, how can I be all power in me? It's because our God is all powerful. He says, this is mighty power working through us which causes us to patiently endure all things while we give thanks to God because we know that He is the One who has patiently endured the cross for us which led to the reality that through Christ the Father has now qualified us.

He has rescued us. He has transferred us from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light where we've been redeemed by His Son in whom we have forgiveness of sins. All of it's the work of God.

And He continues to enable us to stay in His kingdom and to please Him through His power by His Spirit. That's the joy of a life lived in the Lord.

There's no other Lord in the world who says, I want you to live life this way and I'm going to make sure that you do it through My power. There's nothing else like it in the world.

I would say all of us live life to please some Lord. just like the Colossians. All of us live life to please some Lord.

[27 : 57] It might be a family member. Your parents, your spouse, your siblings. It might be a boss or a co-worker. I'm just trying so hard to please this boss.

It might be a group of friends or peers. I'm trying so hard to please these people. It could even just be ourselves. I want to be Lord in my own life.

We're all living to please some Lord. I want to show you the difference between living to please all the other Lords out there and living life in the kingdom of God. If we put this up, this is life under all the Lords of this world.

Here's what they say. You've got to do stuff. You've got to do something. And it better be good. Because you've got to do enough to prove your worth.

This is every Lord in the world. If you do enough and you prove yourself worthy enough, then perhaps you might belong. And that's a brutal life to live.

[29 : 08] We live it at work. We live it with our friends. We do this to ourselves. If I can just do enough, I can prove that I'm worthy enough to belong to some group or some Lord.

I see the Gospel, though it's the kingdom of God, it's everything in reverse. It's the way it should be. It says, the Lord God says this, you belong.

That's the starting point. Well, Paul says, you have been qualified. You have been rescued. We have been transferred into His kingdom. We have been redeemed.

We continue to be forgiven. We belong to the kingdom of light, Paul says. And we belong because we were found to be worth the very life of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

I think Monica even said it up here. She realized she belonged. She was worth the life of Jesus Christ.

[30 : 15] And because of that, now we go do. We go do through Christ, being strengthened by the very power of God which strengthened Him, through the very Spirit which enabled Christ to endure the cross on our behalf.

That's what we now live in as we go bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God. In short, this is the way life was supposed to be.

This is what God created at the beginning. This is such a freeing, beautiful, enjoyable life. You won't have to say, man, I should really give thanks to God or I should really be joyful because the deeper that that sinks into your heart, the more you realize, I belong to the kingdom of God.

I was worth Jesus Christ's life. Now I can go and I can do all the things that the Lord of my life has called me to do. Being strengthened by His power.

Don't live life on your own. Don't spend your life trying to please some second-rate Lord. Don't even spend your life trying to belong to this God.

[31 : 29] Live life in the Gospel. Recognize that that you belong in the kingdom of light. That you are worth the life of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

And that by His Spirit, through His power, being strengthened with all power by God Almighty, we can go do the good works that He's prepared beforehand for us to do.

And we will enjoy life in our Lord. Let's pray. Father, we thank You so much for the Gospel.

God, even as we begin to go down the road of trying to think of how could I ever grow in enough knowledge of You? How could I ever bear enough fruit through enough works to please You?

As we even begin to go down that road, Lord, we feel the weight of our efforts on our shoulders. And oh God, we thank You that Jesus says, my burden is light.

[32 : 37] My yoke is easy. We thank You that Jesus says, come to Me, all you who are weary and heavy laden.

We thank You that in Christ we find rest. We thank You, God, that we don't have to guess about Your will for our lives. You've given it to us through Your Scriptures.

We thank You that the Scriptures clearly proclaim that we are Yours because of what You've done. That we were worth Your Son's life.

And that You have prepared good works for us to do joyfully, thankfully, and through Your power. God, would this truth sink deep in our hearts and would this be the joy that springs out from us as we worship You today and through the week.

By Your Spirit, in Christ's name, Amen. Amen. If you would stand with me.