

Prayer for the Saints

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Date: 19 April 2026

Preacher: Matt Coburn

[0 : 00] Well, friends, it's such a blessing, is it not, to hear these testimonies and to think about! the fact that God in each of our lives is painting a picture. And each painting has many, many brushstrokes.

And that brushstrokes creates a portrait of God's work in our lives. Thank you for those of you who shared this morning. What a blessing it is to hear. I just want to reflect briefly, I promise you, on a question of what would you want the brushstrokes of your life to be, of your portrait, as you seek God to know Him and to love Him. I want to look briefly at Colossians chapter 1, verses 9 through 12, to see what God would have us pray for in our own lives to be a part of our portrait. So, let's read this together, Colossians chapter 1, verses 9 through 12.

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power according to His glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered 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.

Friends, briefly, there are four things that I want to encourage us to pray for. The first is that we might live a life worthy of the Lord, pleasing to Him and bearing good fruit, that our lives might be a place where when our neighbors and our family and our co-workers see our lives, they see God at work in us. This is not an exhortation for performance so that we might be seen by others, but it is a prayer, a desire that God might so work in us, that He would produce this fruit like a tree produces fruit naturally in a healthy way. So may we produce fruit in our lives that shows others what an amazing God we serve. This is the second thing that Paul prays for the Colossians and for us that we might increasingly know God more and more. And this knowledge is, many of you know this, it's not merely knowing about God, learning facts and information that's good and important and right and necessary, but it's actually also about knowing God in a relational sense. In the way that I get to know my friend who, when I first met them, I knew nothing about them, but as I've grown, I not only know about their hometown and what their preferences are and what movies they like, but I know their character and we have a relationship of trust and love that grows. So too, even more so with God. God wants us to not nearly know about Him, but to know Him in this ever-increasing, deepening, deepening relationship of trust and love as we meditate on His Word, as we go to Him in prayer, as we worship Him regularly.

May our lives have this portrait as well, that not only would we bear fruit, but that we would know God increasingly. I'm so thankful for the saints among us who have been doing this not just for five years or 10 years or 20 years, but for 40 years or 50 years or 60 years. We have so much to learn from them, and I'm encouraged to see them pressing on to know God still more. Thirdly, Paul encourages us that we would have endurance in our faith through challenges and trials. We often pray for deliverance, and this is right, because we serve a God who does deliver us, and so God does provide in miraculous ways, and God does meet us in times of need, in provision completely unlooked for, and this is true.

[5 : 13] And yet we also know that God often provides for us in ways that we didn't look for, and sometimes God provides for us in time frames that we didn't prefer. That's a nice way of saying it, right?

God's provision is not always instantaneous or complete, and the life of faith is not a sprint, but a marathon. But knowing that God is with us through it, God gives us the ability to be those whose portraits are filled with, strengthened, and endured with joy, because God has proven himself

faithful to us through it all.

And of course, as George so rightly said, God does this so that it might be seen that God is at work in us, because if he just simply made our lives easy, it'd be very easy for us to think our lives are just easy, and God would be removed from the picture. But through the trials we face, God shows his power in our weakness. What a glorious thing it is. And then the fourth thing that Paul enjoins and prays for here, and pray would be my prayer for us, is that we would live lives of daily gratitude for our salvation, because that's how Paul ends this passage, right? And so often we overlook the basic things in life. We overlook the fact that we have air to breathe, and we have roofs over our heads, or all the other things. And just like physically in the way that God has provided for us so much, though we tend to focus on the things we lack, but he's provided for us so much, how much more so spiritually? We think of how much more we want, but can we look back and see how much we already have in Christ that he has delivered us from the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of his beloved son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

The gospel is that we are lost in our sin and under God's condemnation, and God has come and rescued us from that through Christ because of his death on the cross and the resurrection, God has come and fulfilled us from that. And so we are going to be able to do that.

And so we are going to be able to do that. And so we are going to be able to do that. So that we might have a hope of eternity. Oh friends, daily, daily, may we add brushstrokes of thanksgiving and gratitude and praise to God that the joy of our salvation may be daily in our lives.

[8 : 07] A brief encouragement from Paul for us this morning. And it leads us to baptism because this morning we're going to have a baptism. Guy is going to come.

Guy, why don't you come on up while I talk about it a little bit. Guy is going to come up and be baptized this morning. Right? And baptism was instituted by God to celebrate that great salvation. Come on up here. Come on. You got to stand with me for a minute while I talk. Right? It was instituted by Jesus in the Great Commission. Matthew 28, he said, go and make disciples, baptizing them. Right? It's a public profession of faith that the one being baptized guy is going to testify that he is trusted in Christ for his salvation. And I just want to encourage you, if you're here this morning and you're trusting in Christ and you haven't been baptized, come talk to us. We'd love to celebrate this with you. We'd love to help you follow through with this command that God has given us. Baptism, in our understanding, is one of the key passages is Romans 6, 3 and 4. Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried, therefore, with him by baptism, into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in the newness of life. That is, by faith in Jesus we are joined with Christ. And what we picture in baptism is this death to sin and to the old self and rising to a new life that God is giving us in

Jesus Christ. It is a beautiful thing that we do when we baptize people that pictures this internal work that God has already done in believers.

Guy has met with the elders. We happily and joyfully affirm his profession of faith this morning and are happy to celebrate with you. So we are going to invite Guy to come and share briefly his testimony and then we will move ahead with the baptism.

[10 : 14] So So