

Sunday, July 12, 2009—Praying the Powerful Prayers of Paul—A Prayer to be Filled with the Knowledge of His Will—Colossians 1:9-14—Part 2

Introduction/Review

- Since the day Paul heard of their love in the Spirit in verse 8 he did not cease to pray for the Colossians that they might:
 - be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding
 - walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing
 - be fruitful in every good work
 - increasing in the knowledge of God
 - strengthened with all might according to his glorious power unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness
 - giving thanks unto the father
- This verse is the key to the entire prayer. Everything that Paul prays on behalf of the Colossians steams and flows out of verse 9.
- The word translated “filled” in Colossians 1:9 is that same word that is translated “complete” in Colossians 4:12. To stand complete means that nothing else is needed.
- Therefore, it is Paul’s prayer on behalf of the Colossians that they might be filled to capacity with a complete knowledge of God’s will for them.
- Popular Idea 1: One notion teaches that God has a general and specific will for each believer.
 - General: to be a Christian, serve God, not steal, lie, etc.
 - Specific: who to marry, where to work, what car to buy, which job or career to take, what church to go to, etc.
- Popular Idea 2: God has a detailed life plan uniquely designed for every believer revealed through outward circumstance and inward impressions.
- Typical 3-Step Formula:
 - Read the Word of God and Pray
 - Read the Circumstances of Your Life, The Road Signs, Opening and Closing of Doors and Windows

- Listen for God's still small voice, inner voice, or inner feelings, promptings, hunches, and impressions.
 - According to the prevalent teaching the result of this process will lead you right to center of God's will.
- Colossians 1:25-- God's revelation to mankind ceased with the completion of the Word of God. To ask God to communicate with you apart from his word is to expect extra-Biblical revelation. If you are functioning like this in your relationship with God you are asking him to do something he already told you he wouldn't, reveal things to you.
 - Believers need to stop and realize that God's will is not first focused on us but on God and what he is doing. If you want to do the will of God find out what God is doing. Do that and you will be doing the will of God.
 - How do you find out what God is doing? The word of God rightly divided tells us what God is doing. He is forming the church the Body of Christ.
 - Ephesians 1:9—revealed the mystery of his will
 - Ephesians 2:13-18—forming the one new man
 - Ephesians 5:15-17—understanding what the will of the Lord is
 - Ephesians 4:22-32—how are you doing on the things
 - I Thessalonians 4:3-5—will of God that ye abstain from fornication
 - I Thessalonians 5:16-23—in everything give thanks for this is the will of God
 - Romans 12:1-2—good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God
 - Circumstances are the context or the stage upon which we live our lives. We are to act upon that stage based on God's written revealed will.

Circumstances as a Means of Divine Communication

- God has never used circumstances as a means of divine communication.
- Romans 2:17-18—God's Word to Israel told them his will. Even with Israel the sign people, God did not communicate with them apart from his written word.
- Deuteronomy 11:16-17—When there was no rain and crop failure Israel did not have to sit and wonder what God was trying to tell them, His word already told them in advance what the physical circumstance meant.
- I Kings 8:32-35

- Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28-29
- An event can never communicate a message apart from the written Word of God. The only way you know you have come in contact with the God of heaven is through an objective standard outside of yourself.
- Deuteronomy 13:1-4—what was Israel to follow the physical sign that they had seen worked in their midst or the word of God?

The Example of Gideon

- Judges 6:1-10—why is Israel in this condition? Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28 they failed to keep the law.
- Judges 6:11-22—the angel of the Lord already worked the sign that Gideon as a member of the nation of Israel required.
- Judges 6:36-40—Gideon is not operating on the basis of faith in these verses, rather he is functioning in unbelief.
- Believers are constantly fleeing the Lord in this fashion.

Closet Calvinism vs. Pauline Thinking

- The prevalent teaching on God's will not only advocates the reading of circumstances but it also is based heavily in the ideas of Calvinism.
- Ephesians 1:11—everything that happens is the outworking of God's will. The all things in this verse have a context.
- Calvinism is basically theological determinism. The idea that everything happens for a reason.
 - *Determinism*—is the belief that all events, including human choices are determined or caused by another. For pagans it's the gods for Christian its God.
 - *Indeterminism*—is the belief that all events, including human choices are uncaused.

- *Self-Determinism*—a person’s moral acts are not caused by another, or uncaused, but are caused by oneself. One’s actions are freely chosen, without compulsion, in a situation in which they could have done otherwise.
- As believers do we really want to function with the pagan belief that everything in our lives is determined in advance by a God who then holds us accountable for actions in which we had no choice to do otherwise?
- Tell missionary story about his SUV.
- I Samuel 6:9, II Samuel 1:6, Ecclesiastes 9:11, Luke 10:31
- Story from 6th grade, world trade center
- There are certain events that God has predetermined but they are all recorded and revealed in Scripture. Including the mystery of his will.
- The events that happen in our lives are the result of our own free choices or the intersection of someone else’s. Living in a sin cursed world people get sick and die not because God is taking them home but because that is the reality of our existence on earth. There is such a thing as being in the right place at the right time or the wrong place at the wrong time. Everything that happens to you is not the result of a predetermined life plan that has already been decided.
- Paul did not function like a closet Calvinist. Paul made decisions based upon a renewed mind taking into account the objective facts from the word of God.
 - I Corinthians 7:39
 - I Corinthians 16:12
 - II Corinthians 2:12-13
 - Philippians 2:25
 - I Thessalonians 3:1
 - Philemon 15

The Charge of God Not Working in Your Life

- I was teaching this information once and someone asked, “if what you are saying is true, how does the Holy Spirit work in your life?”

- The same Holy Spirit that was active in the inspiration process according to II Peter 1:21 indwells and seals believers unto the day of Redemption.
- I Thessalonians 2:13—the Holy Spirit works in your inner man when we by faith apply God's word to the circumstances of life.
- Ephesians 4:16-20—we have already know for a pervious study in this series that God works today on the inner man of believers who by faith apply his word to the details of their lives.

Concluding Thoughts

- We have a completed book. Inspiration has ceased.
- Signs belong to Israel's program.
- God has never used circumstances as a means to reveal his will.
- Through the cross we have peace with God and a standing in absolute grace.
- Therefore we are free and competent based upon our understanding of the current dispensation of grace and with a renewed mind to make decision for ourselves.
- If you will find out what God is doing and do that you will be doing the will of God in the details of your life.
- God needs his ambassadors in every community and on every job site and place of occupation.