

Sunday, January 26, 2020—Colossians 1:9 Filled with a Knowledge of His Will

### Introduction

- Our last two studies in Colossians have been devoted to understanding the subject of Pauline Prayer. In doing so, we have used Colossians 1:9 to frame a discussion about the notion of praying without ceasing as well as the Holy Spirit's inspired prayers for the body of Christ.
- Colossians 1:9-12 is one such prayer. In this passage we have the Holy Spirit's prayer for the body of Christ recorded by inspiration of God by the Apostle Paul. Last week, I suggested that if we want to learn how to pray that we ought to pay attention to how the Holy Spirit prays for us by considering these inspired prayers found in Paul's epistles.
  - Index of Pauline Prayer
- I can't explain everything about prayer and how it works. Here is what I do know.
  - Paul, my apostle, instructs me to pray without ceasing.
  - Paul followed his own advice and prayed without ceasing.
  - Let the Holy Spirit's prayers for the body of Christ recorded in Paul's epistles teach us where our greatest areas of need reside so that we can focus our prayers accordingly.
  - Realize that we can pray for anything especially those things causing us anxiety and worry.
  - The Holy Spirit knows that I sometimes don't know what to pray for, so he actively makes intercession for me.
  - Just do it! Stop trying to figure out every detail about how it works and just do it.
- Romans 8:15—a believer talking to God in prayer can have all familiarity and intimacy of you talking to your dad, your spouse, or your best friend. Today, during the dispensation of grace, as members of the body of Christ we have the privilege of having direct access to the lap of our heavenly father via prayer.

### Colossians 1:9

- **For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;**

- Three weeks ago, we broke down verse 9 into its respective pieces before assembling them as a whole in order to ascertain what Paul was driving at in this verse. What is the cause that Paul and Timothy upon hearing of the faith and love of the Colossians had not ceasing praying for them with respect to? The answer is found in the second half of verse 9 and extends to the end over verse 12 at a minimum.
  - “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”
  
- **That ye might be filled**—the Greek verb rendered “might be filled” is in the passive voice and the subjunctive mood which means that the action may or may not happen depending upon the circumstances. Thus in English it is rendered as “might be filled” because the action of being “filled” is not automatic or else Paul would not be praying for the Colossians unto this “cause.”
  
- **Filled**—the Greek word rendered “filled” carries the following meanings:
  - to make full, to fill up, i.e. to fill to the full
  - to render full, i.e. to complete
    - to fill to the top: so that nothing shall be wanting to full measure, fill to the brim
    - to make complete in every particular, to render perfect
  
- Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language* defines the word “filled” as “Made full; supplied with abundance.”
  
- 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.
  - Matthew 1:22, 2:15
  - Matthew 2:15—when a prophecy is fulfilled it is completed, there is nothing left that needs to occur.
  - Colossians 2:10—we are complete in Christ, there is nothing we need that hasn’t already been given to us freely by Jesus Christ.
  
- **with the knowledge of his will**—what does Paul “desire” that the Colossians be “filled” with? The “knowledge of his will.” Therefore, it is Paul’s prayer on behalf of the Colossians that they might be filled to capacity with a knowledge of God’s will.

- The issue of “knowledge” in a recurring theme in Holy Spirit’s prayers for the body of Christ.
  - Ephesians 1:17-18—“spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him”
  - Ephesians 3:16-21—“know the love of Christ”
  - Philippians 1:9—“your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment.”
- Colossians 1:9—what is it that Paul wants to Colossians to be filled with? A knowledge of God’s will.
- **in all wisdom and spiritual understanding**—knowledge of God’s will is going to come through the vehicle of wisdom and spiritual understanding.
  - Ephesians 1:17-18
  - Ephesians 1:8—“wisdom” is one of the spiritual blessings that God has caused to abound toward us “in Christ.”
  - Proverbs 1:2-3; 2:2, 6-7; 3:13, 19; 4:5, 7; 5:1; 9:10
  - I Corinthians 1:17-2:13—the word “wisdom” is used 13 times
    - I Corinthians 2:7—Paul is speaking about the wisdom of God in a mystery. You cannot truly know God today without understanding the secret purpose that he is now accomplishing through the body of Christ.
  - Ephesians 3:10—through the revelation of the mystery God has revealed his “manifold wisdom” to the universe.
  - Colossians 1:28, 2:3, 3:16—all deal with different aspects of the wisdom of God.
- Colossians 1:9—Paul’s prayer is that through wisdom and spiritual understanding the Colossians would be filled to capacity with the knowledge of what God is doing.
- Ephesians 1:9—God has already made know to us “the mystery of his will.” God’s will for humanity has already been revealed on the pages of Scripture. It is not something that we are charged with going out and discerning by reading the circumstances of our lives rather it’s something the believer has the capacity to be filled with the knowledge of as well as stand perfect and complete in based upon a sound understanding of God’s Word rightly divided.
- More on this next week.