

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

“Powered By Prayer”

Colossians 1:9-14

2004

Introduction

Hudson Taylor: “If we want to see mighty wonders of divine power and grace wrought in the place of weakness, failure and disappointment, let us answer God’s standing challenge, “Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.” (Jer 33:3)

John Bunyan: “You can do more than pray, after you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed.”

Paul was a prisoner in Rome (1,000 miles east of Colosse), and was physically unable to help the church that was facing the dual threats of paganism and false teaching. Despite the fact that Paul was physically chained, he remained spiritually aggressive, mounting a forceful offensive on their behalf through the power of prayer.

I The Motivation for Paul's Prayer

A. He had heard about: [Verse 3-5]

1. Their **faith** in Christ Jesus - Rom 10:17
2. Their love for all the saints - Gal 5:6
3. Their **hope** stored up in heaven - 1 Pet 1:3-5

Love ← Faith ← Hope ← Word ← Truth ← Christ (The wellspring of life)

B. He had not stopped **praying** for them [Verse 9a]

Literally: “Pray and desiring”

Praying = Proseuchomai = “To pray”

Desiring = Aiteo = “To ask, beg, call for”

Paul praises God in prayer for:

1. The report regarding their faith, love, and hope
2. The success of the gospel in their midst through the ministry of Epaphras

1 Thess 1:3 “We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Application: Continual prayer that Paul speaks of in 1 Thess 5:17 is a function of spiritual awareness and openness to the Holy Spirit’s promptings:

1. “Random thoughts”
2. Newspaper articles, TV news
3. Life’s circumstances
4. Offenses against ourselves or others

Col 4:2 “Devote yourselves to prayer, **being watchful** and thankful.”

Watchful = Gregoreuo = Vigilant or watchful”

II The Focus of Paul's Prayer

A. He asked God to **fill** them: [Verse 9b]

Fill = Pleroo = “To level up (a hollow), to fill full to running over”

“To fill up a deficiency.” Every believer has deficiencies in his or her knowledge of the Word and these deficiencies need to be filled through a careful study and an accurate handling of the Word (2 Tim. 2:15).

1. With the knowledge of His will:

Knowledge = Epignosis = “A thorough knowledge or comprehension”

Will = Thelema = “Desire, purpose or pleasure”

To counter the false knowledge of the heretics, Paul prays for a full and more penetrating knowledge of God's will.

Eph 1:17 “I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.”

Eph 5:17 “... do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.”

Application:

To know the will of God is the greatest knowledge! To do the will of God is the greatest achievement!

God designed our minds to be filled with the knowledge of His will, but if they are empty of that knowledge, they can become quickly filled with all kinds of junk.

In fact, the subjunctive mood in the Greek, which is the mood of *potentiality*, suggests that while God's design is for us is to know His will for our lives, we face a multitude of distractions that can prevent us from knowing God intimately.

What distracts us?

Indifference, laziness, carnality, materialism, wrong priorities, and (as in the case of the Colossians) false teaching that sought to add to the fullness of salvation as revealed in Christ.

How can we grow in a thorough knowledge or comprehension of God's will?

a. Through all spiritual **wisdom**

All = “Every kind or category”

Wisdom = Sophia = “Wisdom”

Definition: “Doing the right thing in the right way with the right motive.”

Ecc 8:5 “... the wise heart will know the proper time and procedure.”

Chuck Swindoll: It is “the God-given ability to see life with rare objectivity and to handle life with rare stability.”

James tells us that there are two kinds of wisdom:

1. Wisdom and is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil – James 3:15

This is the kind of wisdom the false teachers were boasting of.

2. Wisdom that is heavenly – James 3:17

This wisdom is found in the Bible and is taught by the Holy Spirit.

John 14:26

b. Through all spiritual **understanding**

Understanding = Sunesis = “To put together” (like two rivers joining)

It is the application of Biblical truth to life’s challenges and struggles.

1 John 5:20 “We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true.”

III The Goal of Paul's Prayer

A. That they might live a life **worthy** of the Lord [Verse 10a]

Worthy = Axios = “Appropriate or suitable”

To walk in a manner worthy of the Lord means to walk in a way that is consistent with who the Lord is and the high position we now occupy as His sons and daughters.

Eph 4:1 “... I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.”

Phil 1:27 “Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.”

Illustration: “Remember, you’re representing our family!”

B. That they might **please** the Lord in every way [Verse 10b]

The chief aim of every believer ought to be the pleasure of God!

2 Cor 5:9 “So we make it our goal to please him ...”

Eph 5:10 “... find out what pleases the Lord.”

There are many things that we can do to please God, but are at least two things that we can’t do if we want to please the Lord:

1. We can’t live in the flesh!

Rom 8:8 “Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.”

2. We can’t live without faith!

Hebrews 11:6 “Without faith it is impossible to please God!”

Note: We are not to please the Lord in some or most ways, but *in every way!*

What is it that pleases God?

1. Bearing fruit in every good **work**

John 15:8 “This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”

John 15:16 “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit -- fruit that will last.”

Two types of fruit in the Bible:

1. The inner fruit of spiritual character – Gal 5:22
2. The outward fruit of disciple making – Matt 28:19-20

2. Growing in the knowledge of God

Knowing God is the secret to the abundant Christian life! It is a life of enjoying an ever-deepening relationship with God through the study of His Word and our response through prayer and worship.

John 17:3 “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”

2 Peter 3:18 “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

3. Being strengthened with all **power** [Verse 11a]

Strengthened = Dunamoo = “To make strong something or someone that is inherently weak.”

Power = Dunamis = “Miraculous power or strength”

Application:

This power comes:

a. From the Holy Spirit

Eph 3:16 “... may strengthen you with power through his Spirit”

b. From the Lord

Eph 6:10 “... be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.”

c. In the midst of our weakness

2 Cor 12:9 “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”

a. According to his glorious might

Might = Kratos = “Vigor, dominion, power, strength”

What is that power and might like?

Eph 1:18-20 “That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms ...”

C. That they might have great **endurance** and patience [Verse 11b]

Endurance = Hupomone = **Hupoo** = “Under” **Meno** = “To stay, remain, abide”

The word for endurance has reference to difficult circumstances.

It means to remain under a trial without giving in -- to endure or remain steadfast regardless of the **intensity** and **length** of the testing. It means to wait on God for answers and deliverance without taking things into your own hands.

Heb 12:1 “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance [hupomone] the race marked out for us.”

Application: We have a choice how we face life’s challenges:

Sickness, pain, discouragement, financial loss, death of loved ones, warfare, physical and spiritual weaknesses, satanic attack, and persecution.

Isa 50:10-11 “Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the word of his servant? **Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God.** But now, all you who light fires and provide yourselves with flaming torches, go, walk in the light of your fires and of the torches you have set ablaze. This is what you shall receive from my hand: You will lie down in torment.”

Reward:

James 1:12 “Blessed is the man who perseveres [hupomone] under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.”

Patience = Makrothumia = “Longsuffering and forbearance”

The word for patience has reference to dealing with difficult people.

It means “not easily provoked into angry words or retaliatory actions.”

James 5:7 “Be patient [Makrothumia], then, brothers ... because the Lord's coming is near.”

D. That they might joyfully give **thanks** to the Father [Verse 12a]

Joyful = Chara = “Cheerful, calm delight”

Give thanks = Eucharisteo = “To express gratitude”

James 1:2-4 “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

Eph 5:20 “... always giving thanks to God the Father for everything ...”

Why should we be thankful?

1. Because it honors God - 2 Cor 4:15
2. Because it is commanded in Scripture - 1 Thess 5:18
3. Because a thanklessness life produces:
 - a. Pride and self-reliance - Rom. 1:21
 - b. A bitter, complaining, grumbling, joyless life - Heb. 12:15

IV The Justification for Paul's Prayer

The following three verbs are in the aorist (past) tense, and refer to the fruit of Christ's finished work on the cross.

A. God had qualified them to share: [Verse 12b]

Qualified = Hikanoo = "To make sufficient or fit"

It is the Father who qualifies us, not our own works! - Eph 2:8-9

1. In the **inheritance** of the saints

Rom 8:17 "Now if we are children, then we are heirs-heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory."

What is our inheritance in Christ?

Past: Justification -- the forgiveness of sin

Present: Heavenly position and present spiritual possessions (sanctification, power for a life that is pleasing to the Lord)

Future: Glorification, the eternal estate and eternal rewards

2. In the kingdom of light

Three properties of light:

1. **Functional:** To illuminate, expose, guide, and direct

2. **Intellectual:** To distinguish truth from error and falsehood

3. **Moral:** To discern what is right, good, and orderly

Prov 4:18 "The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day."

B. God had **rescued** them from the dominion of darkness [Verse 13a]

Dominion = Exousia = "Authority, jurisdiction, power"

It refers to the dominion of Satan who exercises authority and jurisdiction over men and the world.

2 Cor 4:4 "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

1 Peter 2:9 "But [NOW] you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

Application:

He has rescued us and delivered us:

1. From darkness to light – 1 Peter 2:9

2. From slavery to freedom – Gal 5:1

3. From condemnation to forgiveness – Jn 5:24

4. From the power of Satan to the power of God – Acts 26:18

C. God had brought them into the kingdom of the Son He loves [Verse 13b]

Brought = Methistemi = “To transfer or translate”

Methistemi had a special significance in the ancient world. When one empire conquered another, it was customary to take the population of the defeated empire and transfer it lock, stock and barrel to the conqueror’s land. It is in this sense that Paul says we have been **brought** into God’s kingdom.

Kingdom = Basileia = “Rule or realm” of Jesus Christ

C.S. Lewis: “There is no neutral ground in the universe: every square inch, every split second, is claimed by God and counterclaimed by Satan.”

Application:

As believers in Christ, we have been rescued from the tyranny of Satan's darkness and rule. We are no longer aliens and outsiders to relationship with God. No longer enslaved to sin. No longer hopeless and helpless. No longer unwanted, unworthy and unloved.

Why? Because we have been transferred into the kingdom of Jesus Christ!

1. In whom they had **redemption** [Verse 14a]

Redemption = Apolutrosis = “To ransom in full” (present tense)

Illustration: Ransom

In ancient times, if someone had amassed a debt too large to repay, they would be enslaved by their creditor until they worked off the debt or until a relative redeemed them (paid their debt in full).

Application:

Our sin put us so deep in the hole that we were hopelessly in spiritual debt – enslaved to Satan and to our own flesh. But the Good News is that we have a Redeemer, Jesus Christ, who paid our debt in full on the cross so that we could be freed from our overwhelming debt of sin.

Eph 1:7 “In him we have redemption through his blood ...”

2. In whom they had **forgiveness** of sins [Verse 14b]

Forgiveness = Aphesis = “Pardon or remission” or literally “a sending away” “It thus speaks of the removal of our sins from us, so that they are no longer barriers that separate us from God.” (Vaughan)

Col 2:13-14 “When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.”

Application: Christian’s terrible burden in John Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress

He had a huge sack of sin on his back.
 It slowed his progress and hindered all he tried to do.
 He finally reached the cross where his burden fell off into a great abyss.
 For the first time in his life, Christian was truly free. He was forgiven!

Conclusion

Maybe you are carrying a heavy load of sin today. It affects everything you do. It is draining the life and joy from your life. It has slowed your steps and worn you down. And your heart cry is to be:

1. Free from the weight of a guilty conscience
2. Free from the slavery to sin
3. Free from the fear of punishment and death

If you would like to be free, you can be! It's as simple as ABC!

1. **Admit** and repent of your sin
 Acts 3:19 "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord ..."
2. **Believe** in Jesus Christ
 John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."
3. **Confess** Jesus as your Lord
 Rom 10:9 "That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."