



The Parish of Wellow

Colossians 1:9-14 - Paul's Prayer for the Colossians

Passage, Talk Notes and Questions

Please feel free to take these talk notes home with you and you may wish to find some time during this week to consider the questions below.

1. Talk Passage – Colossians 1:9-14

9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.10 And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

2. Talk Notes

2.1 Introduction

- How is our prayer life going?
- Paul writes this letter in Rome, eleven years on from Galatians probably in AD60 whilst he is in prison awaiting trial. Despite being in prison Paul is focussed on others. Everything that Paul knows about this church comes from their faithful pastor and founder, Epaphras (who founds churches in Laodicea and Hierapolis nearby) who very likely became a Christian through Paul's mission in Ephesus.
- We know that the Colossian church meets in the home of Philemon (Philemon 1:1-2 *'To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker... and to the church that meets in your home'* and that three letters were sent at this time: one to the Ephesians, one to the Colossians and one to Philemon concerning his former slave Onesimus.
- Colosse was situated in the western part of modern day Turkey on the southern bank of the River Lycus close to the cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis on a major trade route from Ephesus to the Euphrates (situated in modern day Iraq) and was therefore a classic melting pot of different peoples, cultures, and religions. Does this place sound familiar? Does it sound like our own multicultural Britain?
- The Colossian church has clearly grown but its converts are struggling with false teachers, false beliefs and the prevailing anti-Christian cultures of their day – with the result that they are being tempted to water down the key truths of the gospel.
- Paul is clearly moved and worried by Epaphras' news. He is moved not only to prayer but also to write to this church in Colosse – a place to which he has never been and to a group of Christians he has never met.
- In Colossians 1:9-13 we get an instructive insight into Paul's prayer life. Paul models for us how to pray for our fellow Christians, even when we do not know them. Note that Paul's requests centre on *spiritual* matters, not on material or physical ones. Paul prays that the Colossians:
 - a) Know God's plan. (1:9)
 - b) Bear fruit(1:10)
 - c) Keep going (1:11)
 - d) Give testimony of God's graciousness (1:12-14)

2.2 Know God's plan (1:9)

- In any relationship, be it a marital one or parent child relationship, as we journey with each other we discover each others hopes and plans. Paul prays that the church in Colosse will in effect deepen and strengthen its' relationship with God and as it does so it will understand more clearly God's plan s for them.
- So often in prayer we come to God with our own agenda and expect him to endorse it. Paul prays that the Colossians will seek God's will in prayer: - *'be filled with the knowledge of his will'*
- The false teachers were trying to persuade the Colossians that in order to be better Christians they needed to know more. They needed a better understanding of the Bible. They needed 'to earn through knowledge' their salvation.
- This type of false teaching is so very dangerous because it undermines what Jesus did on the Cross. We have relationship and salvation because of what Jesus has done, there is nothing that we can do to earn it. The Colossians need to believe and trust in this, but do we?

2.3 Bear fruit (1:10)

- As our relationship grows and develops with the Lord, says Paul, it will lead to changed behaviour.
- The false teachers were advocating that 'more knowledge' would produce better behaviour hence better Christians.
- We can have all the knowledge in the world, but if we are not in relationship our lives will not be changed or affected one iota!
- How would we describe our relationship with the Lord at the moment?

2.4 Keep going (1:11)

- Paul knew from his own experiences that walking in close relationship with God is not easy.
- We cannot do it in our strength says Paul we need God's constant help and assistance.
- Do we seek God's assistance in this ongoing spiritual warfare?

2.5 Give testimony of God's graciousness (1:12-14)

- Paul prays that the Colossians Christians will develop an attitude of thanksgiving – a central theme of this whole letter.
- Paul believes, again contrary to what is being peddled by the false teachers, that a sign of healthy and mature Christians is a gratitude to God for the extraordinary things he has done in Jesus.

2.6. Conclusion

Paul's prayer should encourage us to pray for our missionary projects for our Christian brothers and sisters in different parts of the world who we do not know. Let us this week specifically pray for those who Christians we do not know. Let us ask God that they will:

- a) Know God's plan
- b) bear good fruit
- c) Keep going
- d) Give testimony of God's graciousness

3. Questions to consider at home

- 1) Surely a better understanding of the Bible is a good thing. Why does Paul berate the false teachers for promoting this?
- 2) If relationship is key to our faith, how do we build and develop our relationship with the Lord?
- 3) As a church are we *'bearing good fruit'*?



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