

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

## **Brethren, Let Us Know God's Will!** **Colossians 1:9-14**

**Keywords:** the will of God,

**PowerPoint Presentation included:** NONE

**SermonAudio Blurb:**

### Dismiss

#### **I. Introduction.**

- A. We continue in this series of the marks of a maturing church.
- B. So today I want us to look at Colossians chapter 1, vss 9-14.
  - 1. Read.
  - 2. In this passage Paul is praying for the people in the church.
  - 3. It is not a prayer for a select few in the church. Rather, it is a prayer for all those who belong to Jesus Christ in Colossae.
  - 4. These things are heavy upon Paul's mind. These things are ideas and convictions that drive Paul and motivate Paul as a Christian and he wants us to have the same convictions.
- C. Introductory points:
  - 1. Paul had not visited this church before. There were those who knew Paul, but he had never actually been there to strengthen them in the Lord.
  - 2. This is not a church started by Paul. But it is a church that Paul has great concern for. It is a gentile church and he is the apostle God called to minister to the gentiles.
  - 3. This is one of the prison epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon).
  - 4. If Paul were here today he would be greatly interested in Missio.
  - 5. It is most commonly believed that Epaphras was the founder of this church (cf. 1:7). If you wish, he was their first pastor, but really, he appears to be an evangelist, what we would call today a "church planter" (Col 4:13).

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

6. There were some very dear friends of Paul in this church as well.
    - a. Perhaps the closest is Epaphras himself, who even became a prisoner with Paul as a result of preaching the gospel that Jesus Christ is Lord.
    - b. But there were also those most of us would recognize. Philemon—to whom Paul wrote his letter. And Onesimus, who is the subject of Paul’s letter to Philemon.
  7. This church was a wonderful church, but it is also quite young in its faith—which brings certain dangers with it.
    - a. Most of the people there had been saved out of a deeply pagan background. And there were still ties and connections that pulled on them.
    - b. The values and thought patterns of that society would press on them, potentially affecting how they thought and made decisions.
    - c. There was much evil in the city and they were not exempt from its effects. There were many temptations and traps that were all about. Immorality was common in this city and its temptation was constantly calling to them.
    - d. And though they were a growing church, they had not yet matured, and this resulted in them being vulnerable to error and damage. And so Paul writes this letter to strengthen them in their faith.
  8. Apparently it was Epaphras who had visited Paul and informed him of the condition of the Colossian church—it was good news.
    - a. Faith in Christ (1:4a).
    - b. Love of the brethren (1:4b).
    - c. And it is because of this good news that Paul prays. It breaks into three parts:
      - (1) The first is Paul’s prayer (9).
      - (2) The second is Paul’s purpose (10-12).
      - (3) The third is Paul’s reason (13-14).
- D. May we need to hear them well and take them to heart.
1. I rejoice as I have seen the love many of you have shown for our Lord out of your faith in him.

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

2. I rejoice as I have watched this church grow in its love for other brothers and sisters. We our eyes are beginning to stretch out from just us and extend outward. More and more of us are beginning to ask how we can minister and encourage other believers. And this is cause for all of us to rejoice.
3. I give thanks to God that we are growing in what it means to love those outside the Church and welcome them to come and hear.
4. But this does not mean that we have arrived, any more than this church in Colossae has arrived. What our church needs to have is a clearer understanding of God's will, and this is exactly what Paul is asking God for here in our passage.

## **II. Let us know God's will.**

### **A. Paul's prayer (9).**

1. Paul is in chains. And as he sits in prison he is not complaining, nor did he give up. Rather, this became an opportunity to minister to the churches through two ministries: one was writing letters and the second was lifting up these churches in consistent, fervent prayer.
2. He and Timothy, along with anyone else who happened to be with him were busy praying.
  - a. So much was Paul a man of prayer that he could say that he prayed for them unceasingly.
  - b. This does not mean that he was somehow always uttering a prayer. Rather, it means that Paul has put this church on his regular prayer list and they were consistently being prayed for by Paul.
  - c. This is not one of those one time prayers that all Christians give. This is something that Paul has committed himself to do on a regular basis with no end in sight.
3. Now, for what is it that he is asking his heavenly Father?
  - a. First, that they, as a church, may be filled with a knowledge of God's will.
    - (1) What every church needs to grow as a body to the glory of God is a clear sense of direction. And that direction is to be the will of God.

# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- (2) We have messed up the will of God in many ways today. We tend to think of it in a self-centered way. We talk about walking in the center of His will. We spend a lot of time thinking about God's will for "my" life.
- (3) While this is not wrong, it tends to miss the point of the will of God and get us all busy chasing down unfruitful paths trying to discern if God's will is for us to have more children, move to another city, marry a certain person, accept some job, etc.
- (4) But this is not how the bible describes the will of God.
- (5) The will of God is not something hidden. It is not some vague thing that we are to try to figure out.
- (6) Rather, it is essentially obeying God's word. I do not have the time to develop this today, but you need to hear this well.
  - (a) I have seen many people who are very concerned about God's will in the smallest details of their life, and yet be in willful rejection of what God has shown them to do in the bible.
  - (b) How many husbands have sought the Lord in prayer on whether they should take a different job or move somewhere. Yet that whole time they do not rightly love their wives, lead their households, train their children, nor live with their wife in an understanding manner.
  - (c) The same can be said for women who will not joyfully and willingly submit to their husband, they grumble about their children, or act in disrespectful or indiscreet ways. But they claim that they love to do God's will
  - (d) Young people who are excited about serving God in whatever way He way He will lead them, but all the while they seek God's direction, they are rebelling

# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- in their home, or they are dishonoring their parents, they entrap themselves in immorality or rebellion.
- (e) You can apply this to any situation. To say it in the words of the Apostle James, we are to be doers of the Word, not merely hearers of the Word of God.
  - (f) But hearing the Word of God is too often all that really happens.
    - i) We can easily fall into the trap of thinking that because we know what the bible says, that somehow we don't really have to practice it.

Again, I speak this with experience. I have discovered over the years of giving counsel to people that I seldom really teach them something new. One of the most common things I hear is this phrase, "I know." And it is usually followed by the word, "but." As a church, we cannot be found guilty of this. We need to carefully grow in the Word and as we do, we need to encourage one another to live it out in our lives.

- ii) To know the will of God is assumed by Paul to mean that we are going to do it as well.
- (7) To know God's will is a work that God does in the life of believers.
- (a) It requires that we have spiritual eyes that see the will of God as good and necessary.

It is like people who quit smoking or lose large amounts of weight or something like this. Consistently, these people all say the same thing, something happened in their mind, where they began to simply think differently. There came a conviction that it was a good thing for them to do. They saw the benefits of making this change and it became desirable for them.

In the same way, we need to have spiritual eyes that see that obeying our Lord does not hinder us, nor does it rob us from good things; rather, it is the very way of life, joy, abundance, hope, and glory. Which is essentially what Paul is saying in the last part of verse 10.

- b. Second, he is praying that this would be done in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- (1) A true knowledge of God's will comes with this spiritual wisdom and understanding.
  - (2) Wisdom is the knowing how to best use the truth of the bible in a skillful manner in our life.
  - (3) Understanding speaks of an awareness of what is truth and what is error. It is able to see through deceptions and pretty packaging.
4. This is what Paul is praying for on behalf of this church in Colossae. He knows that there are many pressures from the world. He knows that there are many competing beliefs and teachings out there. He knows that it is easy to mistake knowing about godliness and maturity as meaning that you really are godly and mature.
- a. So He is asking God to open up this church's eyes to see the will of God.
  - b. And he is asking that it be done in such a way that it shows genuine wisdom and understanding.
5. Next, Paul gives the purpose of wanting them to know God's will.
- B. Paul's purpose (10-12).
1. He wants them to walk worthy of the Lord.
    - a. In Ephesians 4:1 Paul tells the church at Ephesus to walk in a manner worthy of their calling as Christians.
    - b. But here Paul says that they are to walk worthy of the Lord.
      - (1) Here then, is the standard by which we are to judge ourselves and this church.
      - (2) Paul says we are to be worthy of our Lord in how we live out our lives.
      - (3) This means that we must put away any form of the fear of man, where we are motivated by what others think or don't think.
        - (a) Society cannot be the standard.
        - (b) Parents cannot be the standard.

# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- (c) Your boss cannot be the standard.
- (d) Your wife or husband cannot be the standard.
- (e) And most certainly you cannot be the standard.
- (f) It must be the Lord.

A maturing church is not one that is constantly changing to please people. It is a church that is faithfully moving in a manner that is consistent with God's will. This, in turn, drives the church to seek to be worthy of the Lord in all it does. Its music, its preaching and teaching, its dress, its speech, its actions, its missions, its fellowship—all things related to the life and practice of a Church.

- 2. This is restated in a slightly different way by Paul. He says that we are to please our Lord. But notice that we are to seek to please Him in all ways. Rather, we are to seek to be pleasing to him in every possible way. And Paul enlarges on this by giving four qualities that help us understand his meaning.
  - a. First, to please the Lord is to be bearing spiritual fruit in every good work (10b).
    - (1) We are saved from our sins so that we might do good works that God has prepared for us beforehand.
    - (2) Our Lord is pleased when we are busy working for Him. When we realize that we have been called to a life of service for our Lord.
    - (3) Paul's second letter to Timothy helps us in thinking about this.
      - (a) 2 Timothy 2:19-21.
      - (b) 2 Timothy 3:16-17.
  - b. Second, to be increasing in our knowledge of God.
    - (1) Here Paul brings us back to a completed circle.
    - (2) He starts out praying that they would be filled with a knowledge of God.

# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- (3) And now he is saying that they are to be busy growing in that knowledge. It is not some passive act. But something in which we are to be cooperating with the Lord.
- c. Third, we are to be strengthened to be able to be steadfast and patient (11).
  - (1) Paul wants us to grow in the knowledge of God because a fruit of this is the production of steadfastness and patience.
  - (2) This is something that is indicative of maturity.
    - (a) Young kids tends to run ahead when you are going on a long hike. They feel so strong at the start that they forget that there is a long way to go.
    - (b) But the adult just keeps walking on, knowing that eventually they will catch up to the young child, who by then has given up and is sitting or lying on the ground.
    - (c) A mark of maturity is the ability to persevere and keep moving. It is the immature who are paralyzed by various things. It is the maturing who press on and do not give up.
  - (3) This steadfastness comes through a right knowledge that is believed and then practiced.
    - (a) And example of this is 2 Peter 3:15-18.
- d. The final quality is joyful thankfulness (12).
  - (1) It is so pleasing to our Lord when we joyfully thank him for His salvation.
  - (2) Sometimes our prayers about our salvation can almost sound sad, but they ought to sound joyful!
  - (3) It is good news to know that your sins are forgiven!
  - (4) it is good news to know that you have been made a child of God!



# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- (5) It is good news to know that you and I shall share in the inheritance along with all other believers in heaven. And God desires that we be filled with a joyful thanksgiving for this.
- 3. This leads to the final part of this message. The reason for all of this.
  - a. Remember verse 4, Paul had heard of their faith in Christ and out of that news came the fact that Paul was now praying consistently for them.
  - b. And the whole reason is stated for us here in verses 13-14.
- C. Paul's reason (13-14).
  - 1. He rescued us.
  - 2. He transferred us.
  - 3. He redeemed us.
  - 4. He forgave us.

### **III. Conclusion.**

- A. Beloved, this is a good description of a maturing church.
- B. We are called to be seeking to grow as a body to understand what God's will is for us as a church.
- C. This requires us to grow in a knowledge of His Word. And as we grow in that knowledge we are to encourage and help each other obey it.
- D. And as that happens, we become a church that is worthy of our Lord, who pleases him in all ways.
- E. But this is not done in some sort of fear, but out of joy. Knowing that our sins have been forgiven, that we have become part of Christ's kingdom.