

▼ "Strengthened for Joyful and Patient Endurance" - Colossians 1

▼ Philippians - This week while hiking. Three things jumped out at me:

• 1) Philippians 2:19-24

"19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. 20 For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. 21 For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel. 23 I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me, 24 and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also."

▼ 2) Philippians 4:2-3

"2 I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to agree in the Lord. 3 Yes, I also ask you, true partner, to help these women who have contended for the gospel at my side, along with Clement and the rest of my coworkers whose names are in the book of life."

- These women contended for the Gospel, and yet they had a quarrel so bad that Paul heard about it from prison 800 miles away.
- IT DIDN'T MATTER WHO WAS RIGHT.

▼ 3) Philippians 4:9"

9 What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you."

- THIS IS NOT A BIBLE STUDY. THIS IS A BIBLE DOING.

• 1 Thessalonians 4:1

"Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more."

• Phil 3:17

"Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us."

• James 1:22

"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."

▼ Colossians 1

▼ Colossians 1:1-5a

1 "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will, and Timothy our brother: 2 To the saints in Christ at Colossae, who are faithful brothers. Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints 5 because of the hope reserved for you in heaven."

- A) Paul prays for Christians he has never seen nor met nor visited. As the Word calls us to imitate him, I suggest that we should do this as well, as we did earlier for Tammy in India.
- B) Note how Paul describes the Christians here: (in all of Colossians, he never uses the term "Christian") A Christian - A Saint/brother/sister in Christ, #1 Has faith in Christ Jesus and #2 has love for all of the saints. Those are descriptive marks of being a follower of Jesus.

▼ Colossians 5b-8

"5 You have already heard about this hope in the message of truth, the gospel 6 that has come to you. It is bearing fruit and growing all over the world, just as it has among you since the day you heard it and recognized God's grace in the truth. 7 You learned this from Epaphras, our dearly loved fellow slave. He is a faithful servant of the Messiah on your behalf, 8 and he has told us about your love in the Spirit."

- C) The church in Colossae was planted by Epaphras - he shared the Good news/the Gospel, and it bore fruit

▼ Colossians 1:9-12

9 "For this reason also, since the day we heard this, we haven't stopped praying for you. We are asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, 10 so that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God. 11 May you be strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for all endurance and patience, with joy 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the saints' inheritance in the light."

▼ D. What is the will of God? In part, at least, it is this:

1. That we would walk in wisdom and spiritual understanding.
2. That we would please the Lord with a worthy walk.
3. That we would fruitfully (with impact) do multiple good works.
4. That we would grow in the knowledge of God. 5. That we would be strengthened with HIS power (not our own power.)
6. That we would endure with patience.
7. That we would endure with joy.
8. That we would endure with thankfulness.

▼ E. Paul the apostle, one of the most anointed evangelists and messengers in church history, has been in continuous prayer for this church since hearing that the gospel was bearing fruit there. We can glean at least three important truths from Paul's prayer and practice here:

1. Praying for other believers will make a difference. Prayer is powerful. Yes - it is God who answers prayer, and aimless prayer is meaningless...but the Bible portrays prayer as powerful. 2 Cor 1:10-11, "10 He has delivered us from such a terrible death, and He will deliver us. We have put our hope in Him that He will deliver us again 11 while you join in helping us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gift that came to us through the prayers of many." James 5:6, "The urgent request of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect."
2. You have not because you ask not. When we as a church, or we as people, go through times of trouble and are not able to endure them with patience and joy, part of the reason might just be that we are NOT praying for each other.
3. The prayer itself. I have a tendency to get in ruts in prayer, and say stupid stuff - sometimes vainly repeating myself. We should absorb apostolic prayers in the Bible, memorize them, and seek to pray in the same vein. Want to know how to pray for somebody in a trial (or what to say to them)? Turn to Colossians 1:11-12

▼ CLOSE/INVITATION:

- Colossians 1:13-14

"13 He has rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son He loves. 14 We have redemption, the forgiveness of sins, in Him."

▼ There are people here that have heard the word of truth, but have not yet been rescued. THAT SHOULD LITERALLY KEEP YOU UP AT NIGHT, and I HOPE IT DOES!
They are like John and Charles Wesley - one of the most prolific preachers, and they most prolific songwriter in church history:

- Even though he was already an ordained Anglican Priest, still it was at this time, as a 34 year old wrestling with his faith, that his life turned in a new direction. Here's how he recalled it in his journal entry for that day.

"In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation: And an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

In May of 1738, THREE DAYS BEFORE, one day Charles went to church, and he took the Lord's Supper, he took the Eucharist, and then he came back and said, "Received the sacrament but not Christ." In other words, "I'm going through the motions. Received the sacrament but not Christ. I don't know him. I don't understand. I'm not connected with him."

One of the men who was coming to this meeting was a man named William Holland. William Holland one day brought with him a book somebody had given him, and it was Martin Luther's commentary on the Galatians. One night (it was May 17, 1738) he asked Charles Wesley to read part of the preface, the introduction, to him. This is what we mentioned last week, but in William Holland's journal for that night, or the next day, he said, "When Mr. Charles Wesley got to these words of Luther, 'What, have we nothing to do? No, nothing but accept of him who God has made for us our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.' " He says, "At those words I broke through, and suddenly power came on me and I knew who he was." He became a Christian.

It's interesting, Wesley was reading this thing out loud, and he noticed William Holland was just changed. The next day in his journal he put down, "Mr. Holland seemed to have found faith tonight, but I don't get it." He got it; I didn't get it. TIM KELLER: "That, by the way, kind of helps me a little bit. I realize somebody may go home from worship services absolutely changed, and other people will be going back saying, "I don't get it." That's the way it has always been."

Finally, just a few days later, May 21 ... It was on a Sunday, it was in a service, and what does Charles Wesley say? He finally says, "I found it. I saw by faith I stood, though of myself I am always sinking in sin. So I went to bed, sensing my weakness, but finally confident in Christ." This is Charles Wesley, and only one year later, he wrote a very famous hymn most of you will probably sing some time in the next month. The third verse of that hymn goes ...

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace,
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

169 days until Christmas - more than halfway there!