

## INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Colossians 1:9-12**.
- B. The prayers of Paul as recorded in scripture are precious and unique.
- C. Paul prays for others rather than himself, and he centers his prayers on spiritual blessings, not the material or physical matters.
- D. This prayer makes three requests.

### I. **FIRST, PAUL PRAYED FOR SPIRITUAL WISDOM (Col. 1:9).**

- A. The false teachers promised the Colossian believers that they would be "in the know" if they accepted the new doctrines. Words like knowledge, wisdom, and spiritual understanding were a part of their religious vocabulary; so, Paul used these words in his prayer.
- C. Satan is so deceptive! He likes to borrow Xian vocabulary, but he does not use the Xian dictionary. Long before the false teachers had adopted these terms, the words had been in the Xian vocabulary.
- D. The word of God is an important part of a successful Xian life. God wants us to know His will (Ac. 22:14) and understand it (Eph. 5:1). God is not a distant dictator who issues orders and never explains.
- E. The word filled is a key word in Colossians. Paul used it many times (1:19, 25; 2:2, 9-10; 4:12, 17). It means to be complete or "filled full" or to be fully equipped. The word was sometimes used to describe a ship that was ready for a voyage. The believer has in X, all the he/she needs for the voyage of life.
- F. In the language of the NT, to be filled means to be "controlled by." When we are filled with anger, we are controlled by anger. To be "filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18) means to be "controlled by the Spirit." Paul's prayer, then, is that these believers might be controlled by the full knowledge of God's will.
- G. The first step toward fullness of life is spiritual intelligence--growing in the will of God by knowing the word of God.

### II. **SECOND, PAUL PRAYED FOR PRACTICAL OBEDIENCE (Col. 1:10).**

- A. In the Xian life, knowledge and obedience go together. There is no separation between learning and living. The wisdom about which Paul prayed was not simply a head knowledge of deep spiritual truths. True spiritual wisdom must affect the daily life. Wisdom and practical intelligence must go together (1Cor. 1:19).
- B. Two words summarize the practicality of the Xian life: walk and work. The sequence is important: first, wisdom, then walk; then work.
- C. Our purpose in life is not to please ourselves, but to please the Lord. We should walk:
  - 1. Worthy of our calling (Eph. 4:1).
  - 2. Worthy of the gospel (Phil. 1:27).
  - 3. Worthy of God (1Th. 2:12).
  - 4. To please God (1Th. 4:1).
- D. As we obey God's will in our walk, we can work for Him and bear fruit. We will not just occasionally serve God; we will be "fruitful in every good work" (1:10).
- E. Our Xian lives desperately need balance. Paul has prayed that we might have spiritual intelligence, and that this intelligence might result in practical obedience.

### III. **THIRD, PAUL PRAYED FOR MORAL EXCELLENCE.**

- A. One of the great problems of our present society is the emphasis on "spiritual knowledge" and "Xian service" without connecting these important matters to personal character.
- B. Knowledge, conduct, service, and character must always go together. We know God's will that we might obey it; and, in obeying it, we serve Him and grow in Xian character. While none of us is perfectly balanced in these four factors, we ought to strive for that balance.

- C. We usually think of God's glorious power being revealed in great feats of daring--but the emphasis here is on Xian character: patience, long-suffering, joyfulness, and thanksgiving. The inner victories of the soul are just as great, if not greater, than the public victories recorded in history (Prv. 16:32).
1. **Patience.**  
Patience is an important characteristic of the maturing Xian life. If we do not learn to be patient, we are not likely to learn anything else. Patience is not complacency; patience is endurance in action. It is not talent or training that guarantees victory: it is perseverance (Heb. 12:1).
  2. **Long-suffering.**
    - a. Along with patience, we need long-suffering. This word means "to hold anger" and is the opposite of revenge. Patience has to do primarily w/circumstances, while long-suffering has to do with people.
    - b. God is long-suffering toward people because of His love and grace (2Pet. 3:9). Paul lists both words as marks of a true minister of JC (2Cor. 6:4-6). See also Gal. 5:22; Col. 3:12.
  3. **Joyful.**
    - a. When circumstances are difficult, we should exhibit joyful patience; and when people are hard to live with, we should reveal joyful long-suffering.
    - b. We often use the words *joy* and *happiness* interchangeably, but a distinction should be made. Happiness often depends on happenings. If circumstances are encouraging and people are kind, we are happy. But joy is independent of both circumstances and people.
  4. **Thankfulness.**
    - a. Xians who are filled w/the HS will be joyful and thankful (Eph. 5:18-20). When we lost our joy, we start complaining and becoming critical.
    - b. The Colossian epistle is filled with thanksgiving:
      - 1) Paul gave thanks for the church in Colossae (1:3).
      - 2) Prayed that they might grow in their own thanksgiving to God (1:12).
      - 3) The Xian life should abound with thanksgiving (2:7).
      - 4) Bible study gives evidence of spiritual growth resulting in thanksgiving (3:15-17).
      - 5) Our prayers should always include thanksgiving (4:2).

#### CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. The one blessing that ought to move us constantly to thanksgiving is that God has made us fit, or qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints in light (1:12). God has qualified us for heaven!
- B. And while we await His return, we enjoy our share of the spiritual inheritance that we have in Him (Eph. 1:11, 18-23).
- C. What a wonderful prayer! May we strive to live up to it!
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring-Xians.