

Praying Like Paul

Post-Pandemic Bible Meeting

Week 2

These Sessions of Teaching are going to be
Focusing on the Church in our Present
Post-Pandemic Times.

Colossians 1:9–14

[9] And so, **from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,**

[10] so as to **walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;**

[11] being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy;

[12] giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

[13] He has delivered us from **the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,**

[14] in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

We all must agree that the Pandemic has had a very strong effect
upon our existence/activity.

In a real sense our lives have been altered/changed.

In the life of the church, we all have had questions, how/what the church should be doing in these Post-Pandemic Times.
In what ways do we alter our existence so that we can be effective in the times in which we live.

Pastor Watson Suggest the Church Must be Reset to the Manufacture's Settings.

I stated than maybe our Post-Pandemic Dilemmas are related to our Pre-Pandemic Practices.

Ex. Jonah ended up in a terrible crisis because Jonah Received the Message from God but then He Rejected the Mission from God.

Failure in Obedience is an Invitation to Discipline!

God Never Deal with His Children as an Angry Judge but a Loving Father.

The Storm/Fish were both God's Loving Discipline/Development.

The church must examine itself always in relation to our Obedience to God's Word.

In these Post-Pandemic Times, we have seen various effects upon the Church.

- ➔ People have died in/out of the Church
- ➔ People's Commitments has dwindled toward Church
- ➔ People's Church attendance is down
- ➔ Conversion have decreased
- ➔ Critics are developing

We face Mental/Emotional/Physical Challenges like
never before.

There is much talk today about Mental Illness.

There is a great lack of Stability/Steadfastness among
God's People.

The Questions of last week are the questions for this
week.

- ❖ Where/What Should be the
Focus/Function of the Church in Times of so
much Difficulty/Disarray?
- ❖ How can the Church Remain Faithful to
God in such Faithless times?
- ❖ How can the Church Engage/Effective in
Mindful Living in a Mindless Age?

**These are times when the Church Must have
Steady Pre-Occupation with Christ.**

**These are not times to run from God but to
run to God.**

The Church desperately needs to have a Steady Pre-Occupation
with Jesus Christ, His Will/Way/Word.

Remember these are the Predicted Times of 2 Tim. 3:1-9

The Times/Pandemic is not the Church's Biggest Problem, we have a Sinful People Problem.

The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ has a Reality/Responsibility. Matthew 5:13-16
Salt/Light says who we are/what we are to be doing.

We have both Identity/Function.

Identity Determines Function/Practice.

Who you are will always determine what you do.

How do we Fulfill such a Difficult Assignment, especially in such a godless environment?

“The Church Must Be Found Faithful
by
Focusing on Christ”

We must have a Steady Pre-Occupation
With the Lord Jesus Christ

- 1. The Church Must Know What It Means to *Believe in God.***

2. **The Church Must Know What It Means to *Belong to God.***
3. **The Church Must Know What It Means to *Bow to God.***

I believe it should be our desire in these difficult times to
be/see a Model Church in a Messy World
A Church that can become a Model/Pattern for another
Church’.

- The Model Church Receives/Shares the Word of God.
- The Model Church Reaches out with the Word of God in the Context of Holy Living.
- Committed to Living to Please God in the Pursuit/Practice of Holy Living.
- The Model Church Displays Brotherly Love by Living Quiet Lives/Minding Their Own Business/ Working Hard with Their Own Hands.
- Growing more/more in Love/Faith/Hope with a Biblical View of Eternity/Second Coming Encouraging/Building One Another up in the things of God as we Actively Wait for The Lord’s Return.
- Trusting/Depending on God to Sanctify/Preserve His People at the Day of the Lord because we have not been

appointed to Wrath but to Obtain Salvation through Jesus Christ. 5:23-24

Healthy Church

- Fidelity in Doctrine
- Holiness in Lifestyle
- Love/Unity in Fellowship

This Requires Continual/Constant Fervent Prayer for the Church.

However, what should we be Praying?

Our 1st Lesson tonight comes from Paul's Glorious Letter of to the Church of Colossae.

The Subject/Structure of the Book

- It is Glorious because its Great Subject/Theme of the Book, The Preeminence of Our Lord Savior Jesus Christ.

In the Book of Colossians, Text after text, **Our LJX is presented in all his Glory,**

1. *Supreme*
2. *Preeminence*
3. *Sufficient*

In chapter 1 – **Jesus Christ is the Way, His Preeminence is Declared** – there are 4 sub-headings.

- In verses 1 through 14, we find that Jesus Christ is Preeminent in the Gospel.

- In verses 15 through 17, we find that Jesus Christ is Preeminent in the Creation.
- In verses 18 through 23, we find that Jesus Christ is Preeminent in the Church.
- In verses 24 through 29, we find that Jesus Christ is Preeminent in Genuine Ministry.

In chapter 2, **Jesus Christ is the Truth, Christ's Preeminence Defended.**

And Paul defends Christ's Preeminence against three Great Dangers that just about every individual Christian, and just about every local church, will face sooner or later.

- There is the danger of Empty Philosophies instead of Christ, in chapter 2 verses 1 through 10.
- There is the danger of Legalism instead of Christ, in chapter 2 verses 11 through 17.
- There is the danger of Man-made Doctrines instead of Christ, in chapter 2 verses 18 through 23.

In chapters 3-4, **Jesus Christ is the Life, Christ's Preeminence Demonstrated.**

Paul says that the Preeminence of Christ must be demonstrated in the believer's life, and in the life of the church, in 6 ways.

- Christ must be Preeminent in the Christian's Conduct. We have that in chapter 3:1-11.

- Christ must be Preeminent in the Christian's Character. We find that in chapter 3:12-17.
- Christ must be Preeminent in the Christian's Home. We find that in chapter 3:18-21.
- Christ must be Preeminent in the Christian's Work. Paul addresses this in chapter 3:22 - 4:1.
- Christ must be Preeminent in the Christian's Witness. We find this in chapter 4:2 - 6.
- Christ must be Preeminent in the Christian's Service. We find this in the rest of chapter 4:7 -18.

Jesus Christ Alone is the Preeminent ONE!

Immediately our hearts/minds should be gathering some of what we should be Praying about for the Church.

I tell you Colossians is a Glorious Book because it forces us to face the Realities of Our Glorious Lord/Savior Jesus the Christ and come away knowing we are Complete IN Him!
He is Sufficient for Our Every Need!

The Purpose of the Book

Paul wrote this Epistle to the Colossians because of a report that they were falling into serious error.

False teachings/practices in Colossae were influencing the Saints there and threatening their faith.

The Church was being Infiltrated by False Doctrines

Gnosticism
Syncretism
Pluralism

Similar cultural pressures pose challenges for the Church today.

This epistle helps us in knowing how to Identify/Exposes Falsehoods while emphasizing/ beholding Jesus Christ's Preeminence in All Things.

By studying the book of Colossians, we are strengthened in our
Love/Faith/Hope.

And receive protection from deception/sin.

Our time of study tonight will not focus on the Book of Colossians in its Entirety but on the Central Prayer Paul Prays for the Church with hopes that we can become more Effective in Praying for the Church.

Praying for the Church is of Supreme Importance because we are living in Serious/Challenging days.

As I look around at evangelical church, especially in America, Brothers/Sisters I am deeply concerned. I am concerned that no one seems to be concerned.

Problems:

1. **Theological Compromise** (every single bible doctrine is under attack).
2. **Status quo existence** (going through the motions, seem that many people are asleep at the switch). I am not talking about the Air Traffic Controllers. They are supposed to give directives and warning to planes. I am talking about those who are supposed to watch for souls and give warning and directives to the lives of God's people.
 - Little urgency, much importance but little urgency. Good time management says you always do what is Urgent. **Urgency calls for immediate attention.**
 - Little change, transformation, little manifestation of

the true power of the gospel. **Many are seeking Deliverance but no desire for Transformation.**

3. I am concerned that too many Christians seem oblivious to the fact that the world-spirit around us is seeking to conform us.
4. I am concerned that we are not heeding the admonition of Rom 12:1-2.

- We are becoming more and more syncretistic (define).... Which is simply the **attempt to reconcile contradictory beliefs. The attempt to mix truth/error.**

The important question of the day is “DOES IT WORK not IS IT TRUE.”

- Watchword of the day – ‘Whatever.’

Problem: We the people of God seem as if we don't even know anything is happening. We are Asleep/Unconscienced

5. More and more our world is becoming hostile to the gospel (this country, world).
6. Not only is a Christian **‘lifestyle’** not appreciated by the world, but the church has started to not appreciate a Christian lifestyle, so the Christian message/messenger for many are considered irrelevant. **Relevant is another watchword.** Relevant is a relative word. So relevant is determined by the interpreter not the Definer.

Examples.

- See Supreme Court debate.
 - See the decision in United States over homosexual marriage. What will we do?
7. The Exclusive Nature of the gospel is utterly rejected.

- If we speak of ‘god’ in some general/generic way and most people find that acceptable. We can even speak of ‘Jesus’ if we mean a nice religious/moral man.
- But speak of him as he truly is – *The Exclusive* Savior, King of kings/Lord of lords, Judge – that is *not* acceptable. We can’t pray in *his* name; we can’t bring *that* Jesus into the public square. And not even in some of our churches.
- Spirituality is fine, but *Jesus of the Bible* must go.

Therefore, we need to give ourselves to PRAYING For THE CHURCH!

→ *It is in such a situation like ours that Colossians speaks so clearly/forcefully/powerfully to us.*

So, I want to Examine the Prayer of Paul for the Church, to help shape/mold/grow us our praying in these difficult times.

**This is not a Prayer for Possessions but People.
This is not a Prayer for the Physical but the Spiritual.**

- Why? **Because we are *not* the first to experience these pressures.** Our situation was faced, many years ago, by many churches in the NT, but particularly *this* church.
 - a. **How to stand in our day**
 - b. **How to be transformed in our thinking**
 - c. **How to find our remedy in Christ alone – in his Glory, Preeminence – Supremacy. Understanding that Christ Alone is Sufficient for our every need.**

→ *We now turn to vss. 1-14 where we find Paul’s Thanksgiving and Prayer for the Colossian Church*

In vss. 1-2 Preeminent Greeting
In vss. 3-8 Preeminent Gratitude
Colossians 1:3–8

Thanksgiving and Prayer

[3] We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
when we pray for you,
[4] since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that
you have for all the saints,
[5] because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have
heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel,
[6] which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is
bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the
day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth,
[7] just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow
servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf
[8] and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

Paul is Thankful to God for the Church.

Are You Thankful to God for the Church?

- The Faith the Saints Embrace v.4
- The Love the Saints Exhibit v.4
- The Hope the Saints Experience v.5
- The Growth the Saints Encounter v.6
- The Gospel's the Saints Effected 5-6
- The Ministry the Saints Enjoyed v.7-8

Are you thankful for the Church?

How does your Gratitude express itself?

Are you Thankful for the Ministry the saints Enjoy? Are you Thankful for the Growth the saints Encounter? Are you Thankful for the Hope the saints Experience? Are you thankful for the Love the saints Exhibit?

Are you Thankful for the Faith that the saints Embrace?

This is Preeminent Gratitude that recognizes/rejoices/rest in the Work of God's Grace in the Life of His People.

Gratitude is an Appropriate Response to Grace!

Gratitude Expresses itself in Humility/Prayer.

It is Paul Thankfulness/Gratitude to God for the Church that Provokes His Prayer for the Church.

Many points of application could be made from this section, but I want to approach it in terms of: 'Lessons in prayer;' 'Learning from Scripture (Paul) *how* to pray for the church.'

We all struggle with Prayer, do we not?
When we pray (individually/corporately), our prayers often reflect a grocery list of needs, wants, concerns.... but we

wonder if that is what prayer is all about. Is there more to it?

What should I petition God with/for?

(1) Lessons about prayer from the *context* (1:3-8).

(2) Lessons about prayer from the *content* (1:9-14).

1. Lessons about Prayer from the Context (1:3-8).

There are three lessons:

1st A Lesson Regarding the Scope of our Prayers.

→ *Who do we often pray for?* (Question of scope).

- We often pray for family members, church friends, relatives, neighbors. Common link in this? **We already know them.** Rarely do we pray for people we do *not* know.
- *Example?* Colossians (read vv 3-4, 8-9).
 - As stated, the Colossians were people Paul had never met personally.
 - Paul had neither founded the church, nor had he visited it – founded by Epaphras.

→ *But note: Paul had neither founded it, nor visited it, yet he prayed for them.*

- We are in danger of becoming introverted and self-centered/self-absorbed
- We are in danger of losing sight of the big picture of God's Redemptive work in the world.

The Scope of our prayers reflects the size our view of

God and the world!

2nd A Lesson Regarding the Duration of our Prayers. In v.3, WE ALWAYS THANK GOD WE HAVE NOT CEASED TO PRAY FOR YOU. Notice the LINK between Gratitude/Prayer

3rd: A Lesson Regarding the Substance of our Prayers.

These are Lessons about the Context of Prayer

Let's examine this prayer in some detail, because it instructs us both how to pray for other believers/church and what are the essential elements for the church to Grow/Effective in what God has called us to BE/DO.

Paul's Prayer for the Colossian Believers (1:9-12a)

Colossians 1:7–12

[7] just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf

[8] and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

Epaphras has reported the love the Colossian believers have, prompted by the Holy Spirit within them. This expression of love -- probably a profound love for God, but also an affection for Paul himself -- prompts Paul to pray for them. And when he started praying for them, he never stopped. **This Prayer is Stimulated/Motivated by Thanksgiving** that leads to Intercession. To whom much is given much is required. Who on earth has been given as much as the Church? Most of our prayers are motivated by the Negative. Notice it is **Prayer that is Sustained by Necessity**— We Have Not Ceased

[9] And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

[10] so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing/growing in the knowledge of God;

Knowing God (1:9-10)

The first element in the petition for God's People is knowledge of God's Will.

"... 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" (1:9)

"... Growing in the knowledge of God" (1:10c)

When we approach the idea of "knowledge," we naturally think about absorbing facts and concepts. But in Scripture, knowledge often goes beyond this to knowing, being intimately acquainted with a person. As you recall, in Genesis, "Adam knew his wife" (Genesis 4:1) is a euphemism for "have sex with"--intimate relationship. God wants the church of Jesus Christ to know him deeply -- depth of relationship, not just theological reflection about God's nature but an Intimacy in Relational EXPERIENCE.

In verse 9, Paul asks for "God to fill you with the knowledge of his will"--that is, **an understanding of his purposes and way of doing things**. In verse 10 he prays that they might be "... Growing in the knowledge of God"--that is, **growing in relationship with him, getting better acquainted with the person of God**.

Paul modifies the knowledge of God in verse 9 by saying, "through all spiritual wisdom and understanding." ¹⁰ Non-Christian philosophers (who Paul mentions in 2:8) may have wisdom and insight, but is speaking "spiritual" (*pneumatikos*) wisdom and knowledge, that is, given by the Spirit

of God. Has the Holy Spirit made you wise and given you spiritual insight? That is Paul's prayer.

Bearing Fruit (1:10b)

Paul looks for results in one's life:

"... Bearing fruit in every good work..." (1:10b)

The fruit of this Spirit-given insight and wisdom is a life that pleases God. Paul describes this pleasing life as "worthy¹¹ of the Lord." This means both a life of worth and a life that brings credit to the Lord. When Christians live sloppy, hypocritical, and unrighteous lives, we bring reproach on our Lord.

Are lives that are "unfruitful" really Christian? Two teachings come to mind -- one from Paul, the other from James:

"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (Ephesians 2:10)

"What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? ... Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." (James 2:14, 17)

We are not saved by good works; we are saved for good works. If the fruit of good works is not in our lives -- the fruit of the Spirit working in and through our lives -- then how do we know we are true Christians?

Paul prays that the Colossians may be strengthened so they might have "great endurance and patience" (1:11) These are related words.

- **"Endure/endurance"** (NRSV, NIV), "patience" (KJV) is *hypomonē*, "the capacity to hold out or bear up in the face of difficulty, patience, endurance, fortitude, steadfastness, perseverance." ¹²
- **"Patience"** (NIV, NRSV), "longsuffering" (KJV) is *makrothymia*, the "state of remaining tranquil while awaiting an outcome, patience, steadfastness, endurance." ¹³

The words are similar. According to Trench, "*Hypomonē* is remaining under difficulties without succumbing, while *makrothumia* is the long endurance that does not retaliate." ¹⁴

Two other qualities are joyfulness and giving thanks. All these qualities are marks of Christians. All these qualities are the subject of Paul's prayer for the Colossian church. How do you measure up? Are you growing in these qualities?

[11] being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy;

[12] giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. (ESV)

Remember to Pray for the Church

- To know God's will (1:9b).
- To have spiritual wisdom and understanding (1:9).
- To live a life worthy of Jesus, one that is pleasing to him (1:10a).
- To bear fruit by doing good works (1:10b).
- To grow in your knowledge of, or relationship to, God (1:10c).
- To be strengthened by God's power (1:11a) so that you have the qualities of endurance, patience, thankfulness, and joy (1:11b-12a).

Dominion of Darkness, Kingdom of Light (1:12-13)

Now Paul moves from prayer to praise. He has recounted how he has prayed for the Colossian believers. Now he praises God for the dramatic nature of their salvation.

"¹² ... Joyfully giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in [the kingdom of¹⁵] light. ¹³ For he has rescued us from the **dominion** of darkness and brought us into the **kingdom** of the Son he loves." (1:12-13)

Paul describes their salvation in almost cosmic terms -- dominion and kingdom. Let's define the words and then look at the implications of this characterization.

"Dominion" (NIV), **"power"** (NRSV, KJV) is *exousia*. The word originally referred to "freedom of choice," that is, "the 'right' to act, decide, or dispose of one's property as one wishes," then "potential or resource to command, control, or govern." Here it refers to "the sphere in which power is exercised, domain."¹⁶ The word is sometimes used in lists of spiritual powers in both Colossians (1:16; 2:10; 2:15) and Ephesians (1:21; 3:10), usually used alongside "principalities" (KJV) or "rulers" and translated "power" or "authority." Its most famous occurrence is in Paul's classic passage on spiritual warfare and putting on the full armor of God:

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the **authorities**, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." (Ephesians 6:12)

We'll consider these evil spiritual forces further as we study Colossians.

"Kingdom" is the contrasting authority structure, the word always used to refer to the "kingdom of God" or "kingdom of heaven" in the New Testament. The word is *basileia*, which can refer to "the act of ruling"-- "kingship, royal power, royal rule," usually "the kingdom of God" or "royal reign of God," or, sometimes, "territory ruled by a king, kingdom."¹⁷ Look at the contrasts between these two domains:

Satan's realm

- Darkness (1:13)

God's realm

- Light (1:12)
- Love (1:13)
- Redemption, forgiveness (1:14)

We tend to take these concepts figuratively rather than acknowledging the existence of these contrasting spiritual realms, but they are real. One is dark, malignant, and controlling. The other is filled with light, hope, love, redemption, and forgiveness. Dear friends, this is the spiritual issue of our world. In Christ, we offer light, life, and hope to people who are in spiritual bondage. Will we love them enough to care and lead them to the light?

The Father's Salvation (1:12-14)

We've looked at the two spiritual realms. Now read the passage again, with an eye to the action verbs and ideas that characterize God's salvation in Christ:

"¹² ... 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." (1:12-14)

1. Qualified
2. Rescued
3. Brought us into the Kingdom
4. Redeemed
5. Forgiven

Let's take time to examine these concepts one at a time -- even if you already think you know what they mean.

1. **"Qualified"** (NIV), "enabled" (NRSV), "made meet" (KJV) is *hikanoō*, "to cause to be adequate, make sufficient, qualify," perhaps shading into the sense "empower, authorize." ¹⁸ The word is used only here and in 2 Corinthians 3:6 ("made us competent as ministers"). We don't "accept Christ" of our own volition. We aren't masters of our fate. We can only come to God because of his own favor and mercy -- God's grace. He -- and he alone -- has allowed us to approach him. We have no standing on our own to appear before God. Our qualification is our union with Christ, God's beloved Son.

2. **"Rescued"** (NIV, NRSV), "delivered" (KJV) is *rhyomai*, "to rescue from danger, save, rescue, deliver, preserve someone." ¹⁹ Rescue involves giving aid to someone who is so endangered that they are unable to save themselves from death. A hand reaches out and grasps the drowning woman and pulls her to safety. A shepherd's crook helps extract a panicked sheep from a thicket in which it has become entangled -- and is helpless prey to predators. Salvation is not a "helping hand" to assist a person over the bumps of life. It is a "saving hand" to pull a helpless person to safety.
3. **"Brought"** (NIV), **"transferred"** (NRSV), "translated" (KJV) is *methistēmi*, "transfer from one place to another, remove." ²⁰ This talks about a transfer of citizenship from the dominion of darkness to the kingdom of God's dear son. This is not a gradual evolution, but an abrupt event, using the Aorist tense. Jesus taught a similar concept:

"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over²¹ from death to life." (John 5:24)

"We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers." (1 John 3:14a)
4. **"Redemption"** is *apolytrōsis*. Originally the word meant, "buying back" a slave or captive, that is, "making free" by payment of a ransom. Here it means, "release from a captive condition, release, redemption, deliverance." ²² The implication is that we were in slavery, in bondage, unable to help ourselves. But Jesus' death on the cross paid the price for our manumission, our purchase.²³ Paul says, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit.... You are not your own; you were bought at a price." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)
5. **"Forgiveness"** is *aphesis*. Originally the word meant, "the act of freeing and liberating from something that confines, release" from captivity. By extension it means here, "the act of freeing from an obligation, guilt, or punishment, pardon, cancellation." ²⁴ Think about

it for a moment: You have been forgiven of all your sins! It is a free and complete pardon! Praise God!