

First Baptist Church Merritt Island
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COLOSSIANS – Hope of Glory
Walking Worthy of the Lord
Colossians 1:9-14

Some of the early memories I have of my dad are these songs he would make up and sing for my brothers and me. Most of them were filled with the kind of nonsense that little boys find funny. They were great. But my favorite song of dad's wasn't meant to be silly, at all. I won't sing it for you, but the first couple of lines went like this... "Titus is my buddy. Titus is my boy. Titus brings me an awful lot of joy."

Dad sang that song all the time to each one of us. He'd put our name in, and our ears would perk up. If my childhood had a soundtrack, that song would be on repeat.

Something in me came to life when I'd hear dad telling me that I brought him joy. It made me feel closer to him. It might sound strange but hearing that I brought him joy made me want to bring him joy.

Many of you know there is something deep in our hearts that wants to be pleasing to our fathers. I believe that's because there is something at the deepest part of our being that wants to be pleasing to our heavenly Father. We want to hear our Father say our name. We want to know we are His child. We want to bring Him joy.

And that's essentially what our text for today is about. So, look with me at Colossians 1:9-14

Colossians 1:9–14

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've been in this passage for the last couple of weeks.

Big Idea: God gives us the knowledge of His will so we can live fully pleasing to Him.

Let me remind you where you see that in these verses.

God gives...

9 And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you...

Paul is recounting his prayer for these believers. This is something he is asking God to do because the only way for us to truly understand God's will with this kind of wisdom and understanding is for God's Spirit to do that work in us.

God gives us the knowledge of His will...

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

We spent two weeks considering what Paul means by the knowledge of God's will. Without going too far back down that road (again), the knowledge of God's will is primarily a reference to the Word of God that reveals God's heart/God's desires/God's will for His people. It includes all of His commands and the principles of His Word. As the Holy Spirit awakens us to the truth of God's Word, He gives us wisdom and understanding in how to apply God's Word to our specific circumstances. In that way, we are able to discern the Will of God through the Word of God by the Work of the Spirit of God.

God gives us the knowledge of His will so we can live fully pleasing to Him.

10 so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him:

God doesn't reveal His will for us and give His Spirit to live within us just so we will have a head full of knowledge. The purpose of knowing the will of God is so that we will live a life that fully pleases God. Or, as verse 10 puts it, so we will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord. It pleases the Father when we live our lives in a manner that is worthy of the Lord.

The word "worthy" originally referred to what happened when you bought something in a marketplace by using old fashioned scales. You would balance out the scales to see what something was worth. Over time, the word came to mean "suitable." Imagine someone selling grain in the market, weighing it out until the scales balanced, then saying "four shekels is suitable for this much grain...that's a worthy or suitable payment."

Romans 16:1-2

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae, 2 that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints,

Welcome her in way that is suitable, or fitting, for someone who is a faithful sister in Christ. And that's the word Paul is using in our text. God has given us the knowledge of His will – His heart and desire – for us so that we will live in a manner that is suitable of the Lord.

But we need to be really careful here. We can take Paul to be saying something that I don't believe he is saying. We could think that God has told us how to live in His word so that we can roll up our sleeves and get to work, trying our best to be good little boys and girls so that God will finally be happy with us.

That's basically what countless people think (or at least feel) Christianity is.
Do it perfectly = God will be happy. Don't do it perfectly = lightning bolts, cold shoulder,
I can't even look at you right now – your life isn't worthy of Me, so leave me alone until
you get your act together.

I don't believe that's the dynamic Paul has in mind here. I believe it's something more like this:

Imagine you were a stray dog living on the filthy streets of a busy inner city, a literally mangy mutt. Your entire life, you stole scraps of food wherever you could find them. You growled at anyone who got too close. You slept on any clear piece of ground, and you weren't even close to housebroken.

But, one day, your path crossed with a compassionate man. Not just any man, but the king. A king who had magical powers. He wanted to give you a home. He had the power to turn you into a truly glorious dog that any pet owner would be proud to have. That would be awesome. But this King had

more compassion and power than that. He turned you into a child and adopted you as His own. Then, He took you back to his home and sat you among all his other children for the rest of your life.

But you've spent your whole life living on the streets as a stray dog. So, in your new, rightful home, you steal scraps of the table. You growl at the King's other children. Most embarrassingly, you ruin the rug in the living room. Not cool.

This is the point where our view of God starts to come in. Two extremes...grabs you by the neck and kicks you back out into the street OR, just keeps buying new rugs, tells his other kids to keep their distance and let you growl because you aren't really a true child, your just an old dog who looks like one of the kids.

So, the King takes you aside to have a talk. He says something like this: "It brings joy to my heart to have you as my child. That's who you are now. I want you to believe that's who you are. You are no longer a stray. You aren't even a dog. You are a child of the Great King. It isn't my desire or will for My kids to steal food or sleep on streets. It isn't suitable for them. And it isn't suitable for you. That isn't doing you any good, so it doesn't bring me pleasure. What pleases me is when you eat at my table and sleep in your own bed. I don't want to pat your head; I want to hug your neck. That's a life worthy of someone who rightfully calls me dad."

That's what I believe Paul is essentially saying when he says that God makes known His will so we can live in a manner that is worthy, or fitting, of Him.

Colossians 1:12-13

giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,

Remember, Paul is talking about people who are trusting in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. He says God has become our Father. By His gracious work in Christ, He has qualified us to share in His inheritance along with all His other children. The word "qualified" means "to make something sufficient." There's nothing more to be added. God has made you sufficient to be a holy saint who will inherit everything that belongs to Him.

Verse 13 says He has delivered you from a life under the power and oppression of the domain of darkness and transferred us to live as part of the Kingdom of His beloved Son. All of that is done. It's accomplished by God's grace through Jesus.

God is already singing His song over you. "You are my child. You bring me an awful lot of joy."

That's essential to understand because there is all the difference in the world between living to become something and living because you believe you are already that thing.

How many of us have spent decades trying to become what God says we already are in Christ? Working hard to become a saint. Working hard to become a child of God. Working hard to qualify for our heavenly inheritance. Working hard to get out of the grip of darkness. We are already those things in Christ.

So, when God shows us His desire for how we are to live, it's from the heart of our Father who is fully pleased when His children live in a manner suitable for children of the Lord. He is glorified and honored when we live like we are what He has already made us to be in Christ. That's why He gives us the knowledge of His will. So, we can walk worthy of who Christ is in us. Of course, He cares how

we live, and He will not settle for ANYTHING less than what He has made us to be in Christ. Hebrews 12 says He disciplines EVERY person who is His child. John 15 says He prunes every branch connected to Christ so it will bear fruit. He will not settle for less than transformation of our life that matches us being a new creation in Christ because He is a loving Father, and we are His very own children.

And, as you begin to step into His will by obeying His Word and applying wisdom and discernment in the Holy Spirit, there are at least 4 things God does in and through you.

As we walk worthy of the Lord, we bear fruit in every good work.

10 so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work...

When Paul is talking about good works, I take him to be referring to the things we do as we align our lives with His will. For instance, God's word tells us to be loving and kind and forgiving to one another. That's His revealed will for our lives in Ephesians 4:32. Those are good works that come from aligning our lives with His word. And, as we step into those good works, our lives become fruitful.

And here's another place where we get to see that this worthy life isn't primarily about us rolling up our sleeves and trying our best to become pleasing to God. It's about us believing and depending on the work of Jesus in us.

John 15:5

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

If you want a life that is filled with spiritual fruit, then trust and depend on Jesus and step into the life He calls us to live in His word. So, how do you need to step into obedience to God's word today so that you can experience the fruit of Christ in you?

As we walk worthy of the Lord, we grow in the knowledge of God.

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;

Remember, the center of God's will isn't primarily a plan it's a person. It's all about Jesus. All things are made by Him through Him and for Him. It's all about Jesus.

As Christ lives in us and bears His fruit in us, we get a front row seat to watch Him work. We do life with Him. That's one of the ways the truths about God in the Bible get worked into the deepest places of our lives. We see Jesus being Jesus in us.

We don't just read that He is strong, we experience His strength. We don't just read that He is faithful, we experience His faithfulness. We don't just hear about His goodness; we taste and see that He is good.

We deepen in our knowledge, not just about the facts about God but the knowledge of the person of God.

For those of you who have been part of this church for the last 20 years, you've heard me talk about my mom and dad a lot. If you've really been paying attention, you'd know a lot about them. Mom is from West Virginia, the daughter of a coal miner who fought in WW2 and then became a church planter in Ohio. Through the years, I've shared enough for you to know a lot about my parents. You might even know what they look like since they've visited a lot through the years.

But knowing about my parents is not the same as really knowing my parents. I know them. Em and my kids know them. We've lived with them.

And the way we go from knowing about God to knowing God is by stepping into a life that aligns with God's word as we trust in Christ's power to enable our obedience.

As we walk worthy of the Lord, we are strengthened by the power of God.

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

When you step into God's will, believing you are a new creation in Christ, you experience the power of Jesus in you. It's like Peter stepping out of the boat. Jesus told him to, and Peter obeyed, and the power of Jesus was on full display. And that's how it works when faith in Jesus expresses itself in obedience to Jesus. He empowers everything He commands when we seek to obey in faith.

But I want you to notice that Paul isn't just praying for power to obey God's will. He's praying for power to have all endurance and patience with joy.

This gives us great insight into the way God's will works in our lives. When do you need endurance? When you are going through a trial that makes you want to quit. When do you need patience? When you are dealing with people or circumstances that make you want to pull your hair out. You don't need endurance and patience to float around the pool at a resort while sipping your non-alcoholic umbrella drink. You need endurance and patience to stand in line at the DMV; to deal with difficult people who are stuck to your life for the rest of your life; to walk through cancer; to face the debilitating grief of losing your loved one.

Many of us believe that if we live our lives at the center of God's will, our lives will be blessed with smooth sailing. That version of the health, wealth, and prosperity gospel is from hell. Read the Bible.

- Being in the center of God's will, might make Pharaoh, the most powerful man in the world, hate your guts and try to destroy you...just ask Moses.
- Being in the center of God's will, might put you in a land filled with vicious enemies who are trying to wipe you off the map and cause you to live at war every day for years...just ask Joshua.
- Being in the center of God's will, might land you in front of a giant who is twice your size that nobody else is willing to fight...just ask David.
- Being in the center of God's will, might bring great loss and unimaginable sorrow – your loved ones may die and those who don't die might betray you and walk away...just ask Job.
- Being in the center of God's will, might get you thrown into the lion's den...just ask Daniel.
- Being in the center of God's will, might get you killed precisely because you love Jesus and aren't ashamed of loving Jesus...just ask Stephen...and James...and nearly all the other apostles.

- Being in the center of God's will, might get you despised and rejected and hated for no good reason. It might make crowds of people conspire to bring you down. It might lead you to a cross that ends in a grave, just ask Jesus.

I know there are many in this room who are walking through things that make you want to give up or give in or run away. And I absolutely know there are times when our lives are made more difficult precisely because we are choosing to live outside of God's will for our lives. Disobedience brings its own kind of hardship. And that's part of why I believe Paul prays for the Holy Spirit to fill us with knowledge of God's will all spiritual wisdom and understanding. That's how the Spirit brings to our attention whether or not our hardship is the result of our disobedience.

But, as we turn from disobedience to alignment with God's will, our lives may actually become harder, yet God's glorious might in us will always be stronger.

As we walk worthy of the Lord, we give thanks to our Father.

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.

As we begin to live in alignment with what God says He desires for us and experience His transformational power, we become more and more aware of just how much everything good in our lives is the result of Christ's work in us.

And the natural by-product of seeing God's gracious work for us in Christ is thanksgiving. If you truly believe the Father has done and is doing all that He has promised to do for you in Christ, the reflex of your heart is "Thank you, Father. Praise you, Jesus."

- He has adopted you as His child. Thank you, Father.
- He has qualified you to inherit everything that belongs to Him. Thank you, Father.
- He has rescued you from the powers of darkness in this world. Thank you, Father.
- He has transferred you to the eternal Kingdom of Jesus. Thank you, Father.
- He has redeemed you from slavery to sin so that you don't have to continue those patterns of brokenness. Thank you, Father.
- He has forgiven you of all the sin you have ever committed. It's paid for and settled at the cross. Thank you, Father.

And that brings us to the Lord's Supper. This is a table of thanksgiving. It doesn't save us or make us right with God. But it is an outward expression of our faith in Christ. We are taking the bread as a reminder of the body of Jesus. He became a man. He became one of us so that He could be the man no one else could be, the man who fulfilled all of God's will perfectly. In that body, Jesus went to the cross and suffered and died in our place.

And we take the juice as a reminder that the blood of Christ provides a sacrifice that has provided complete forgiveness of sins. We are redeemed and forgiven and transformed because of Jesus.

And this table is a way of saying we are trusting in the work of Jesus. We take it into ourselves as a way of saying we are trusting in the work of Jesus in us.

And we are thankful.