

Text: Colossians 1:1-14

Meaning: Paul told the Colossians he prayed fervently for them

Big Idea: We should pray fervently for one another

Objective: I want the hearers to pray for one another

Theme: How to pray for one another?

PARTNERING IN PRAYER

Background

COLOSSAE

The Apostle Paul is writing from prison to a church that was started as an overflow of his ministry. He had never actually been to Colossae but felt compelled by the Holy Spirit to bring them under his counsel and direction.

Colossae was once a major city but by the time of the Apostle Paul it had become a small market town. Located just a handful of miles from Laodicea and Heirapolis it was the little brother of the two bigger more prominent cities. So, Colossians is the letter to the small church in a small town. God doesn't measure a church by its size, He measures it according to her faithfulness to the gospel and her willingness to be salt and light in her city, and based on the early commendation in this letter the church at Colossae did just that.

Paul wrote to the church in Colossae to fortify it against false teachers who might try to impose strict rules about eating and drinking and religious festivals. Paul shows the superiority of Christ over all human philosophies and traditions.¹

GNOSTICISM

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Col.

The Gnostics (Greek *gnosis*, meaning "knowledge") proposed that they had superior knowledge by way of secret revelation and even went so far as to claim that they were the "correctors of the apostles." Gnosticism intersected philosophy, speculation, and pagan mysticism with apostate Christianity.

At its center, this philosophy has a dualistic view of reality. The material world and the immaterial world were totally separate, the material being intrinsically evil and the immaterial being intrinsically good. For the Gnostics, it was inconceivable that a good God could have created such an evil, material world. Thus they argued that a divine spark, or emanation, from God created the physical universe. It was equally difficult for the Gnostics to believe that Jesus could have had a physical body. Many Gnostics argued Jesus only "appeared" to have a physical body.

These teachings were part of a special body of knowledge, or *gnosis* that was necessary for salvation. Therefore, salvation was by information and not transformation. This special saving knowledge God imparted only to an elite few. Because the soul alone was good, salvation was purely spiritual; there was no place for the resurrection of the body in Gnosticism. The very heart of Christianity was at stake!

The main theme of the book of Colossians is the CENTRALITY OF CHRIST. The gnostics taught that there was something bigger and greater than Christ, but Paul combats that by saying from Christ and through Christ and to Christ are all things! He is the greatest knowledge, He is the highest pursuit, and following Him leads to a life that is transformed!

Today we begin in chapter 1 with the Apostle Paul commending the church for her growth in the gospel and her willingness to go and make disciples. And Paul shares here with them how he prays for them. In the New Testament we have some incredible Pauline prayers for the different churches, and in these prayers we learn how we can pray for one another.

Some say, "the least I can do is pray for you." The truth is the most we do for someone is to pray for them.

Reminds me of a story of two men who were talking at church one day and one said to the other, "you know we've had a real hard time later it seems like everything around me is falling apart – let's pray together." And the other guy's eyes got real big and he said, "has it come to that!"

Prayer should be our first priority not our last resort

Prayer is like the umbilical cord for an unborn child – it is our continuous lifeline to God.

HOW TO PRAY

Matthew 6:9-13 – the Lord's Prayer

Pray then like this:

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.

¹⁰Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹Give us this day our daily bread,

¹²and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

In the Lord's Prayer Jesus gives us some principles for prayer. Those principles can be explained by using the word PRAY as an acrostic for the following:

PRAISE
REPENT
ASK
YIELD

But once you have a general direction in your prayer life – what's next?

Today's passage is about intercessory prayer or praying for others. How do we effectively pray for each other? The Apostle Paul shows us here by sharing His prayer for the Colossian believers.

How should we pray for one another?

READ COLOSSIANS 1:1-14

Paul says here that we should pray for:

1. S UCCESS

Paul says here that he prayed that they would be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. What does that have to do with success? Everything!

WISDOM IS LIVING LIFE SUCCESSFULLY.

In Proverbs 9:10 Scripture says the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. So, fearing God is success. Putting Christ first, obeying His will for your life is success.

What does success look like?

Knowing God's Will (v.9, 10b)

Success is first measured, Paul says, by knowing and doing the will of God. Scripture tells us that we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. God has a specific purpose and plan for each of our lives to bring glory and honor to Him and to build His Kingdom on earth. The question is what is that will?

This raises questions like:

What relationships should I be in?

Where should I live?

What should I do for a living?

What ministry does God want me in?

What should I do with the resources God's given me to further His Kingdom?

Keep in mind the theme of Colossians is the CENTRALITY OF CHRIST. Christ is central to the discussion of God's will. The will of God IS ALWAYS JESUS.

Knowing God's will comes from KNOWING GOD'S SON, KNOWING GOD'S WORD, AND KNOWING GOD'S CHURCH.

It doesn't matter how much money you make, feats you accomplish, or notoriety you gain if it's all outside the will of God.

I'D RATHER BE AT THE SMALLEST CHURCH IN THE SMALLEST TOWN IN AMERICA INSIDE THE WILL OF GOD THAN AT THE LARGEST CHURCH IN THE LARGEST CITY IN THE WORLD OUTSIDE OF GOD'S WILL!

Walking in God's Ways (v.10a)

Paul prays that they would walk in a manner worthy of the Lord pleasing Him in all respects.

SUCCESS IS INTEGRITY – END OF DISCUSSION

There is no SUCCESS without INTEGRITY!

Some people's talent takes them to places where their character cannot keep them. You take care of your discipline and your character and God will take care of your success.

Obedience to the Lord, living out the Word, is the truest measure of success.

Working in God's Kingdom (v.10b)

Paul prays that they would bear fruit in every good work. Fruit bearing speaks of character, but it also speaks of lives being transformed by the gospel.

CHURCH – WHAT IS TRUE GOSPEL FRUIT? Keep Colossae in mind. Small Church, small town – BIG INFLUENCE, BIG THINGS HAPPENING IN PEOPLE'S LIVES FOR JESUS!

God gives success to His Children so that we can help others in their struggles. God gives strength to His Children so we can help others in their weakness.

Jesus Himself said, "THE GREATEST AMONG YOU WILL BE YOUR SERVANT."

SUCCESS IS SIGNIFICANCE IN SOMEONE ELSE'S LIFE. Success is never measured simply by accomplishing self-serving goals and ideals.

2. S TRENGTH

Reason for our Strength(v.11a)

Result of Strength(v.11b)

The two words in the Greek here carry the ideas of remaining faithful under pressure and not retaliating when wronged.

So, Jesus gives us strength to NOT RETREAT OR RETALIATE

3. S IGH T

Gratitude(v.12)

God's Kingdom(v.13)