

## #2 Colossians

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Paul is praying for the Colossians. He says 'Since I heard that you're doing so well I have not ceased to pray for you.' He prayed for those who weren't doing so well but he also prayed for those who were doing well... we shouldn't just be praying for those going through trials or those in sin but also for those who aren't.

'And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry...' Eph 4:11

Teachers have been given to us for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. I should always be praying for you and you should be praying for me... 'My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. James 3:1

I'm glad that I did not ask to be a teacher or to seek it out... it just happened... and that's how I know it's God's will... but now I have this stricter judgment hanging over my head... that's why I need you to be praying for me. In fact, Paul instructs us to be praying for all the saints... that's a big order.

'Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit and watching there unto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.' Eph 6:18

After Paul commends the Colossians, he says he's praying for them, implying they should be praying for him.

**Verse 9:** 'For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you,'

Paul and those with him in Rome were praying daily, unceasingly, for the Christians in Colossae. All of the apostles, the eleven original ones plus Matthew and Paul, somehow have understood their God given responsibility to be in prayer at all times for the ever growing Church, for the pastors and elders as well as for all the Saints. They didn't read it in their Bibles and they didn't get it from its having been the habit of the Levitical priesthood... but they understood its paramount importance, nonetheless.

The disciples learned it from spending three and a half years with the Lord Jesus Christ: 'However, the report went around concerning Him all the more; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. <sup>16</sup> So He Himself *often* withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.' Luke 5:15

Did you catch that... when the demand for ministry increased, instead of becoming overwhelmed by the crowds and their needs, He often withdrew into the wilderness to pray, even, all night. He wasn't out there praying for the finances of the 'ministry' to be increased, to buy a new jet... He was praying, not to get close to God, the Father, but, rather, because He was so close to the Father. He wasn't constantly praying in hopes that the Father would finally hear His prayer and hopefully answer it... He prayed because He knew that the Father always heard Him and answered: 'Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" <sup>41</sup> Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up *His* eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. <sup>42</sup> And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said *this*, that they may believe that You sent Me." <sup>43</sup> Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" John 11:40 And we all know what happened next. Lazarus come back to life because Jesus prayed and because He knew that the Father and the Holy Spirit heard Him... because He spent so much time in prayer, in communion, with His Father... with our Father.

When Jesus Christ went out into the 'wild places' to pray He didn't set His watch alarm for 10 minutes or 15... or for the unbelievably long time of 20 minutes so that, after 20 minutes, or so, He could get up, dust off His knees and then go back to His Disciples... they'd ask... 'How long this time, Jesus?... 20 minutes... whoa!! No one can top that!! Hey, Peter... didn't you do 20 minutes that one time last week!??

'Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.' Luke 6:12

We know that His Disciples understood the importance of prayer when we read Acts 6: 'Now in those days, when *the number of* the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. <sup>2</sup> Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and

wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; <sup>4</sup> **but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.**"

They gave themselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.

I'm convicted concerning my own prayer life when I read these things. I don't pray enough... I don't value time alone with God like I would if I really understood the truth of who we are in Christ, where we are in Christ and why we are there in Christ.

The truth is we are, right now and always, seated with the Lord Jesus Christ on His throne, sitting next to God the Father Who is always waiting expectantly for us to turn toward Him and begin talking with Him.

That is reality; we really are seated there with them; we just can't see it; or do you think that God is lying?

'But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup> **and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,** <sup>7</sup> that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.' Eph 2:4

The Disciples learned to pray by watching Jesus for 3.5 years. Paul learned to pray because He had seen it all... he had been there... He had been taken up to Heaven, to the 3rd Heaven where the Lord Jesus Christ had taught him all the truths, mysteries and doctrines that He intended for Paul to teach to His Body, His Bride, His Church, all the things He wanted us to know and understand until He returns for us, soon, in the Rapture.

We studied Ephesians and the Armor of God, some time back. If you remember, after Paul lists out the pieces of Armor which God has provided for us in order to help us stand strong in the face of every enemy attack... after he lists the Belt of Truth, the Breastplate of Righteousness, the Shoes of the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace, the Shield of Faith, the Helmet of Salvation and the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God... finally, as a covering over all of it he tells us to be praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints, and for me...' Eph 6 Paul is saying that the Armor of God will not protect us if we are not also praying always with all prayer for all the Saints. Paul led by example; he was always praying for all the Saints. That is what he is telling the Colossian Christians: I am praying for you always.

**Verse 9b:** (I am praying for you), 'to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

Imagine having Paul, himself, praying for you, that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. Wouldn't that be something! But we have something even better!

"I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. <sup>10</sup> And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them... **"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;** <sup>21</sup> that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. ' John 17:9, 20

Jesus prayed for us, then, 2000 years ago, but He is also praying for us now, continually, He is praying for us, the same things that Paul prayed for the Colossians because He is the One who inspired Paul to write and pray what he did... which was/is the Word of God... and every Word of God is still and always operational: 'But He, (Jesus Christ) because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. <sup>25</sup> Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, **since He always lives to make intercession for them** (us). Heb 7:24

'For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.' Heb 4:12

The Word of God is alive and powerful. It is alive and powerful, still, for us today; what Paul prayed for the Colossians, we can pray for ourselves and for others and we can know that it is something that God will answer and do because, since it is His Word, it is according to His will.

'Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything **according to His will**, He hears us. <sup>15</sup> And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.' 1 John 5:14

It is God's will that we be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. That is what He is doing right now... He is filling us with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding so pay attention!

Furthermore, Paul was praying for the Colossians and Jesus Christ is praying for us right now!

**Verse 10:** 'that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

All of that will be accomplished as we are faithful to pray, for ourselves and each other, and as we faithfully feed upon His Word. As we know and understand His Word and act upon what we learn, we will choose to walk worthy of the Lord and of our calling, we will please Him and we will be fruitful in every good work as we increase in our knowledge of Him. And we will be...

**Verse 11:** 'strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;' Why strengthened with all might? So that we will be able to endure our various trials.

How do we get patience and longsuffering which are the primary fruits God intends to instill in us? When we are genuinely patient, every other Fruit of the Spirit will fall into place. He commands us to love each other. What is the first and foremost proof of true love, agape love, the love of God? **Love is patient** and kind...

'My brethren, count it all joy when you encounter various trials, <sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. <sup>4</sup> But let patience have *its* perfect work, **that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing**. James 1:2

Paul, in praying that the Colossians have patience, is praying that they, and we, have trials since that is the only way God produces patience in us. Are we to pray that others have trials? Perhaps not... we could just pray that others become patient but, on the other hand, maybe we aren't supposed to pray others *out of trials* since that very trial is obviously what God is purposing, in them, for their spiritual growth in patience... unless, of course, we don't really believe that God is in complete control of every life and every circumstance.

Actually, I feel sorry for each of you because none of you have my Mommy to teach you patience. All day, every day. I'm open to loaning her out... if you really need an extra shot of patience... but not for too long since I might quickly fall back into being a very impatient person.

Verse 12: 'giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.'

The most amazing part of God's love for us... he qualified us to be fellow heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ. God the Father's plan for the Lord Jesus Christ is that He be given all of creation, both the physical and the spiritual realms and that He be showered forever with all Glory from God the Father and from every living creature. But then, so amazingly, His plan is also for each of us, the true Church, as the Bride of Jesus Christ, that we actually also own everything and share in His Glory forever. That is the greatest of the mysteries that Paul was shown when the Lord Jesus Christ taught him when he was taken up into the 3rd Heaven.

How did God qualify us for all of that? The Lord Jesus Christ took the full punishment for all our sin and then God clothed us in the righteousness of Jesus Christ: 'For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.' 2 Cor 5:21

All of Creation, from the Earth to the farthest flung stars, galaxies, moons and planets are ours and when the Lord Jesus Christ destroys the present Creation and remakes it brand new... it will all be ours. He loves us so much that it is His joy to share with us, everything... even His Glory. His joy is to bless us, His Bride.

Our 'blessed hope' is the moment the Lord Jesus Christ calls us up to Himself, in the clouds, and we are immediately changed; our mortal, sinful physical bodies will suddenly become like His own... we will have

new, glorified, eternal bodies just like that of the Lord Jesus Christ. We will suddenly be 'immortals.' We will be what comic books and movies have portrayed as 'super heroes.' We will never die.

Something to think about: during the Millennium, while the Lord Jesus Christ rules, from Jerusalem, as the King of kings and Lord of lords, while we, His Bride, rule and reign with Him on the Earth and out into the Heavens... We will never die; we will never grow old; we will have minds more powerful than today's most powerful computers; we will never forget; we will always be learning and remembering everything we have learned; we will never have mental decline or dementia. The mortal humans, who will have lived through the Tribulation, will still have sin natures and many of their descendants will hide hearts and lives of sin. What will happen if one of them, as a terrorist, shoots one of us... or sets off a bomb near us? How would that work since we will be immortal? These are just some of the ways I use my imagination... we are supposed to imagine how great God is and how unimaginable our glorious lives will be; doing so is one of the ways that we glorify God... that we imagine the unimaginable... just something more to imagine and think about... things that make us go... hmmm... imagine that!

God's will for us is that we desire to use our imaginations and spend real time together with Him in prayer, letting our minds and imaginations take us right into His Throne room, sitting with Him on His Throne.

Imagine with me... you're a blind person... you are yourself in every respect but you simply are unable to see... We, who can see, think that would be a terrible thing but those who cannot see simply view it as 'part of life.' Imagine if someone you know, and trust, who can see, told you that they were able to lead you into the very Throne room of God and that they were leading you over to the Throne of the Lord Jesus Christ and that you'll be able to sit there with Him, for as long as you choose, and that Jesus Christ, God the Father and the Holy Spirit were anxiously waiting for you to sit with them and to tell them all about your day and to ask their input into all that is going on in your life... what would you do? What would you say to them and how long would you continue to talk with them? How long would you want to stay? How soon would you check the face of your Braille wrist-watch and tell your friend that it was time for him to lead you out of the Throne room, that you had been there for as long as you could stand it, that you had run out of things to talk about, with them, that you were bored?

Would you ever want to leave? Would you ever run out of things to say? Would you want to stay there forever to just keep on talking or praising or thanking or singing... or would your plan and habit be to just go in for 4 or 5 minutes at a time or for 15 minutes when you were feeling extra spiritual but waiting for your opportunity to leave after you had spent the time necessary to not appear rude?

That really is reality... that is where we are and who we are always with... but some of us, too often choose to ignore them, even wishing we could get away for awhile just to do our own thing, as it were.

Just something to think about... imagine that!

God wants us to grow up in Him... or to grow down as the case may be... 'Except you become as little children, you will in no wise enter the Kingdom.' Children have no problem or inhibition when it comes to imagining. Why do we? Are we too self conscious to really imagine? Are we afraid of what others will think of us? Are we afraid they will think we're nuts? Are we ashamed to imagine? Think about it... only a crazy person could really believe all that the Bible says about God, about us and about our relationship to Him and of us. We can unashamedly be people of faith who are not afraid to believe the impossible.

Don't be afraid to believe the impossible. God's will for us is that we choose to believe Him and that we really are Children of God and as such, heirs of an inheritance that is only bound by the unbounded imagination of God, Himself.

If you can imagine it... the reality is far, far greater. Don't be afraid to imagine great and glorious things. By doing so, we are actually bringing greater glory to Him by believing He is able to do far more than we can even think or imagine.