

Paul Prays for Continued Growth of the Colossian Believers

Colossians 1:11-14

Colossians 1:11-14 – *“Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; ¹² giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. ¹³ He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”*

Background Notes

Paul wrote this letter to the church at Colossae when he was imprisoned - under house arrest. He was arrested for being a Christian, and he was awaiting his trial in Rome. We refer to this period as Paul's first Roman imprisonment. The date was the early 60s AD.

The church at Colossae had been planted during Paul's third missionary journey, in the mid-50s AD. While Paul was imprisoned in Rome, he heard about false teaching that was circulating in the Colossae area. It had not yet infiltrated the Colossian church, but Paul was concerned. He didn't want the Colossian believers to be vulnerable in any way.

So he wrote this letter to warn the believers, and to urge them to become stronger and more mature in the faith. This was his prayer: that the Colossian believers would grow to be strong and mature Christians.

In verse 9-10 Paul prayed that the Colossians would be spiritually sensitive, and that they would have a worthy walk – a life that was pleasing to the Lord. In verses 11-14, Paul prayed that the Colossian believers would be strengthened with power (v11) and that they would have a thankful temperament (v12-14). Let's remember that this was not just a prayer for the Colossian believers. This is the Word of God to us today as believers.

Doctrinal Points

1. God wants His children to be strengthened with promised power.

Verse 11: *“Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy.”*

God never asks us to do something that He doesn't give us the strength to accomplish. God's power is promised to us, and His enabling power is available to us. The power that's promised here is available for every good work that God

wants us to do. Notice verse 10: *“Being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might.”* So God will give us the power to carry out every good work that He wants us to do. It’s according to **His** power, not ours!

What are the results of being strengthened with God’s promised power? It is *“patience and longsuffering with joy”*(v11).

One result is patience, or steadfastness, or endurance. Patience is bearing up when you cannot get out from under a situation - taking it without complaint, refusing to buckle under pressure. It’s the same word that’s used in Hebrews 12:1, *“Let us run with endurance [or patience or steadfastness], the race that is set before us.”* The Christian life is hard, but God gives us the power necessary to live it.

Notice what the Scripture does **not** say. It doesn’t say that if we avail ourselves of this promised power, that we’ll be able to do miracles, or do spectacular signs. When we’re strengthened with the power of God, the result is **steadfastness** and **patience**.

Another result is “longsuffering.” This word is similar to patience and can also be translated as “patience.” Longsuffering is taking abuse without blowing up or retaliating - even when you have the power to do so. This is possible because of God’s power.

Soon after our daughter, Catherine, got her driver’s license, she creased the side of our station wagon against a telephone pole. She came in and told me about it. What does a father do with a daughter who’s a new driver, and the vehicle happens to a car that was fairly new and had no dents? I remember shooting out a prayer to the Lord, asking for longsuffering and patience - and the Lord answered! Our daughter didn’t do this on purpose; this was not an act of defiance or disobedience. So I asked the Lord for longsuffering, and the Lord gave me that - because He does promise us His power.

Once again notice what are the results of God’s power: patience and longsuffering - not performing miracles and spectacular signs! We’re strengthened according to His glorious power for all patience and longsuffering

Notice, too, that it’s patience and longsuffering **with joy**. It’s not just having a stoic attitude and keeping a stiff upper lip, but all the time being uptight and angry on the inside. No - you can do it with joy. God makes this possible through His power. In fact, it’s not possible any other way.

2. God wants His children to have a thankful temperament.

Verse 12: *“Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us...”* And now we see some of the reasons why it is possible to have a thankful temperament. Five reasons are given in these three verses.

a) We can be thankful ***because of our inheritance.***

Verse 12: *“Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.”* We can be thankful because of our inheritance. 1 Peter 1:4 talks about our inheritance that’s reserved in Heaven for us. We are going to be with the Lord forever! We’ve been qualified to partake in this inheritance. We’re qualified now because the righteousness of Christ has been imputed to us.

I don’t know whether there’s going to be skiing or golf in Heaven, or other things that give us pleasure - but it’s going to be **great**, because, our Lord Jesus promised that He’s preparing it just for us! Just remembering our inheritance alone should be enough to give us a thankful temperament.

b) We can be thankful ***because of our deliverance.***

Verse 13: *“He has delivered us from the power of darkness.”* We **were** delivered - not will be delivered. We’re already delivered from Satan’s domain! When we became Christians, we were delivered from the power of darkness.

c) We can be thankful ***because of our transfer.***

Verse 13, *“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.”* We were in the domain of darkness (whether we realized it or not), but now we’ve been translated. We’ve been transferred to the kingdom of God’s Son!

Did you ever get a job transfer? Think of the worst possible job – a low paying job, with long hours, lousy conditions, and maybe in a place like Newark, NJ. But suddenly you get a transfer to a high paying job, with great hours, in Hawaii! Well, that kind of transfer can’t even begin to compare with what’s taken place in our lives. We’ve been transferred out of the domain of darkness, into the kingdom of the Son of His love!

d) We can be thankful ***because of our redemption.***

Verse 14: *“In whom we have redemption through His blood.”* Redemption is the concept of being bought out of slavery. We’ve been “redeemed”! The ransom price was the blood of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ gave His life a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).

e) We can be thankful ***because of our forgiveness.***

Verse 14: *"In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins."* We're forgiven forever! Implied in this word is the idea of remission of the punishment for our sin, as well as the removal of the cause of offense.

Appreciating these blessings -- our inheritance, our deliverance, our transfer, our redemption, our forgiveness -- will certainly result in a thankful temperament. God wants His children to have a thankful temperament!

Practical Applications

1. Let's take advantage of what's available to us.

The power of God is available to us - it is **promised power**. The very power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead is available to us - not for doing signs and miracles, but to be able to display endurance, steadfastness, patience, and longsuffering in our lives as believers.

Take marriage, for example. Are you saying that "the romance is gone from our marriage" or "I'm not happy anymore"? Do words like "endurance, patience, longsuffering" ring a bell? If you want to do God's will and keep that marriage, the power of God is available. If you're struggling in your marriage, the power of God can give you the supernatural strength you need for the endurance, patience and longsuffering that's required to keep your marriage alive and thriving. Let's take advantage of what's available to us.

The power of God is available to us. If you know Christ as your Savior, the power of God is available to you. Let's take advantage of what's available to us!

2. Let's take stock of what we've got!

In this prayer for Christian growth we've seen that we are to have a thankful temperament, and we've seen how that's possible: because of our inheritance, our deliverance, our transfer, our redemption, and our forgiveness. These blessings are already ours!

Sometimes it's all too easy not to be thankful - bad weather, the price of gas, politics, turmoil at work, how we look today - all kinds of disappointing or depressing circumstances. So when we're not feeling thankful, we need to take stock of the amazing blessings God has freely given to us.

Look at what we've been given! As far as eternal realities are concerned, we have it made. This should help us to have a thankful temperament. In fact, it should make us very happy! Let's take stock of what we've got!