

Colossians 1:9-14 “Pray To Be Filled”

Sermon

ESV Text

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1.

Intro

1.

Imagine with me for a moment that you are a teenager in Indonesia whose parents were swept away by the tsunami this past year. You're on a waiting list for someone to adopt you, and you're worried that no one will find you worthy to be part of their family. After months of waiting, one day a case worker gives you the news that a family in America wants to adopt you, and is going to pay for you to fly to America and live there the rest of your life. Wouldn't you be overjoyed in your heart for all the blessings you will receive, but also afraid of all the unknowns in store for you in your new life in America? Your new family is going to see that you have much to learn about how to live in America. You have to learn the language, the culture, customs, new standards of cleanliness, new ways to have fun, new goals for what you should do after high school, a whole new lifestyle. And your new parents hope with all their heart that you will soak all these things in quickly enough and well enough that you will thrive here, that you'll grow up happy, responsible, wise, and thankful that they brought you into their family.

2.

It's that kind of concern that Paul has for you. God has delivered you out of the domain of darkness and transferred you into the kingdom of His beloved Son. He has accomplished this definitive change in your life, but He has much more growth in store for you in the future. It's that growth for which Paul prays in this passage, and for which we ought to pray as well. Now that we have been definitively redeemed, we should pray for God to fill us with all the blessings He has in store for us in Christ. As Paul prayed, we should **Pray to be filled**. We

Col. 1:9-14 - Pray to be Filled

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should pray for two main things: first, to be filled **with a knowledge of God's will.**

This is Paul's point in

v. 9

. Second, we should pray for

a walk worthy of the Lord.

This is Paul's point in

vv. 10-14

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1.

Body: "Pray to be filled"

1.

With a knowledge of God's will 9

1.

First, pray to be filled **with a knowledge of God's will.** Paul says in v. 9,

1.

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,

2.

Paul knows that it is not enough just to passively be adopted into God's kingdom and then make no progress toward Christian maturity. I

t is not enough for you and I to have the definitive *beginning*

of a life of faith in Christ Jesus and love for all the saints. And even worse would be for us to have the beautiful beginnings of faith, and of holiness, only for a day, a few weeks, a month, but then to become entangled again in sins that choke out the seed of the gospel in our hearts and prevent it from growing and abounding. And so Paul prays to God who

alone

can command His Holy Spirit to come like a refreshing shower of rain and *water*

that seed and make it grow. God said in

Isaiah 45:8

["Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness; let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit; let the earth cause them both to sprout; I the LORD have created it."](#)

And when God covers the guilt of your sin with the righteousness of Christ, the more you come to know and understand how great and free and undeserved is God's forgiveness, the more your heart overflows with love for God, with a desire to know Him, to serve Him, to bring Him glory. And so we should pray for God to fill us full of the knowledge of His will.

3.

Do you pray this? "Oh Lord, fill me with the knowledge of your will for my salvation, with a knowledge of who you are, of your saving work and your promises in the Old Testament, of your great work for me in Christ, of the Spirit's application of Christ's righteousness and holiness to me today, of all things I need for life and godliness." "Oh Lord, fill me with a knowledge of your will for my sanctification, fill me with the principles of holiness summarized in your law, fill me with the wisdom to do what is right in my marriage, my family, my workplace. Fill me with a spiritual understanding of this world, with a worldview that is not according to human tradition, but is according to Christ."

4.

Pray for God to fill you with this knowledge, with a knowledge of His

will, with a knowledge of what He has already done for you in *definitively*
saving you, and also to fill you with a knowledge of what *progress*
in holiness He has in store for you today. For God will use that
knowledge to firmly establish you, so that you will be like a tree
planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season, whose
leaves do not wither, and by that knowledge everything you do will
prosper.

5.

To walk worthy of the Lord 10-14

1.

To grow in good works & knowledge 10b

1.

You see, that is the result of being filled with the knowledge of
God's will, with His wisdom and understanding. It enables you **to**
walk worthy of the Lord.

Paul prays for this result in

v. 10

, saying,

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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.

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This is the second thing we should pray for—we should pray for God to enable us **to walk worthy of the Lord**. We who once were aliens and foreigners He has now brought near through the blood of Christ Jesus our Lord, and so we want to live up to His standards, to be like Him, to live in accord with the rules of His household, with the lifestyle of His kingdom. We want to be fully pleasing to Him.

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There are three ways in which the knowledge of God's will enables us to walk worthy of the Lord, and we should pray for each of these three outworkings of that knowledge.

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First, we should pray for God to cause us **to grow in good works & knowledge**. This is what

Paul says in

v. 10b

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bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

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You see, now that we have been adopted as God's sons there is *much*

for us to do

. God gives each of us unique gifts and callings in life and many opportunities to serve Him. Each of us has continual room to bear more fruit in worshiping God, teaching, encouraging, and serving those around us, and caring for, developing, and using God's creation.

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God has created you in Christ Jesus to do good works. Here Paul calls our good works "fruit," and so we can say that you are *like the branches*

of a vine

, and you're made to bear the fruit of good works. Jesus instructed us to abide in Him, saying,

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John 15:4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.

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What it means to abide in Christ is to seek to know Him, to seek in Him all that we need, to draw our life from Him. Our

union with Him is how we are grafted into His vine, our communion with Him is our actually drawing our life from Him and sharing it with Him, and prayer is the outward means of grace whereby we participate in that communion with Christ. Prayer is where we draw near to Christ, give praise to Him, ask Him for forgiveness, for sanctifying power; it is where we ask Him to cause us to bear the fruit of good works.

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So pray for God to cause you to bear fruit in good works. But pray also for Him to cause you **to increase in the knowledge of God**.

Probably what Paul means here is that as God fills us with the knowledge of His will, and thereby causes us to bear the fruit of good works, our experience of doing those good works out of obedience to His will enables us to grow in understanding that will, and to grow in knowing God Himself better. It is in fact by walking in the footsteps of Christ, in extending His grace to others, in taking up our cross, that we come to know how faithfully He walked, how gracious He is, how great was His sacrifice on our behalf.

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To be strengthened to endure 11

1.

And the more we persevere in bearing fruit in good works and increasing in the knowledge of God, the more we develop character, a set disposition to continue doing what is right. And there is a kind of strength in that Godly character which God develops in us. But that strength is nothing if it is not powerfully filled with God's supernatural power over our sin, temptation, and suffering. And so we should pray **to be strengthened to endure**

. Paul encourages us to pray for God's strength in
v. 11

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May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy,

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Our knowledge is nothing without love; our faith without works is a dead faith; but the only thing that counts is faith working through love. Our faith, and even our love—our good works—are nothing, are empty, unless God fills them

with His power. “What we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, ” (2 Corinthians 4:5) and “

we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

” (

2 Corinthians 4:7

) It is for this reason that we need “not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day.

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(

2 Corinthians 4:16

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Without that inner renewal, without that surpassing power within us, we are empty vessels, devoid of strength to resist temptations to sin, devoid of power to do anything good.

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And so we must come to God in prayer, asking Him for the strength to serve Him. He in fact has “all power.”

There is no power anywhere which is not derived from

His power. The waterfall, the earthquake, the thunder, all are under His powerful hand. Sin's power is Satan's perverse way of using the power God has given to him. Death itself is under His sovereign command. God has "all power.

" And it is with this power that God will strengthen you to endure temptations, to endure suffering in this life. All of His might is available to work in you, and so you should pray for Him to exert it in granting you endurance and patience, and even joy in your various trials and temptations. Be certain of this: Jesus Christ is stronger than sin and death, and He is your strength and your song; He has become your salvation.

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Romans 6:9-12 9 We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. 10 For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. 11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their

passions.

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To give thanks 12-14

1.

For being *Qualified* 12

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And so thirdly we should pray for God to give us a thankfulness that accords with the greatness of what He has already done for us.

He has *qualified* us, *delivered* and *transferred* us,
and *redeemed* us. And so we should thank Him for being
qualified
, for being
delivered
&
transferred
, and for
redemption
. Paul says God has qualified us in
v. 12
, when he prays that we would be:

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

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Now if you were to adopt a teenager from Indonesia, I'm certain you would carefully study the information about that teenager in order to make sure he would be compatible with your family. Most people want to adopt a baby, someone you can mold and shape, who will more easily grow up to meet your standards, who will not already be set in their ways. But to adopt a teenager is quite a difficult thing; you know it would be hard to find a teenager who would *qualify* as a *match* with your family.

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But God has done such an amazing thing with us when He adopted us. We didn't meet His standards, in fact, we fought against

His righteous requirements *tooth and nail*. We were His enemies. Our hearts were hard, stony, incapable of loving Him as our Father. And in fact He was angry with us! We had *most deeply* offended Him, and His wrath was revealed against our unrighteousness. But when we absolutely did not meet His requirements at all, when we had utterly missed the mark on His list of qualifications for sharing in His inheritance, He chose to put His own Son to death to take the punishment we deserved. He chose to turn His face away from His beloved Son, who alone deserved to receive His inheritance, in order to exterminate the deep evil in our hearts, in order to remove our disqualifications from before His eyes, and what is more, He then raised up His Son from the dead to prove His victory over our sin, and over death, to prove that the ransom for our souls had been fully paid, and that there was therefore now no

condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, to prove that now we qualify to receive His inheritance! We are no longer guilty, and dirty, and diseased, and worthless, but now we are His beloved sons.

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For being *Delivered & Transferred* 13

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And therefore through Christ's death and resurrection

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

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So says v. 13 of our passage. God has qualified us to receive His inheritance, to join with all of His holy people, to be holy as He is holy, to live in light rather than remain bound under the power of darkness. And not only has God qualified us to receive these blessings by making us righteous in His eyes through Jesus Christ, but He has in fact accomplished our rescue, and our plane ticket and even plane ride into His kingdom. “**H**
e has
delivered
us from the domain of darkness and
transferred

us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.”

Oh, that God would grant us greater and greater thankfulness to Him for qualifying us for these blessings, and for bringing them to pass. Praise God that now “

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them a light has shined.

” (

Isaiah 9:2

) The word has not fallen void which Christ committed to the apostle Paul to preach to the Gentiles, “

to open their eyes,

” as Jesus said,

“so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”

(

Acts 26:18

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While this transformation God has worked in us is definitive, accomplished, once-and-for-all, never to be repeated, nevertheless it is of such greatness and glory that our thankfulness ought always to grow and abound the more we come to understand the riches of God's mercy toward us in Christ.

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He could have left us as outcasts, as strangers to the covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world. He could have left us to the accusations of our conscience, to the deepening darkness of our guilt and sin, to a greater

loss of the knowledge of God, to greater debauchery, to a living death. But instead He rescued us, He delivered us, He brought us up out the miry clay, He cleansed us of our iniquities, He washed us of our filth and corruption, He cast away the bonds of sin and death and Hell, and brought us home to His kingdom of life and immortality, of righteousness, and peace, and joy of the Holy Ghost. We now are within the walls of a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and

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Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, 29 for our God is a consuming fire. **(Hebrews**

12:28-29)

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May God grant us this gratefulness, this acceptable worship, this reverence and awe. And in that gratefulness we will see that He is causing us to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, into all that is pleasing to Him. We will be living more in accord with Christ, just as God is granting us knowledge that is in accord with Christ. Our life-philosophy will not be that of the world, with its darkness of deceit and malicious schemes, but it will be the philosophy of Christ, of His

kingdom, of His light which has shined in our hearts. Let us pray for God to set our minds on things above, where Christ is seated with God. Let us pray to God to cause us to overflow in thanksgiving for this deliverance, for in that overflow we will come into our own as those who walk worthy of the Lord. Pray for His streams of living water to flow from His throne into your heart, but also for that stream to pour forth from your heart in praise to the living and true God who has redeemed you.

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For *Redemption* 14

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And so in **v. 14** Paul reminds us that it is in Christ, in whom dwells all the fullness of God, that our redemption is found. He is God's beloved Son,

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

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These things are found in Him. In Christ. Let us not look to the gifts, but to the giver, for the glory of this kingdom, for the greatness of this salvation. Let us not cling to anything less than the one who is our life, in whom all the treasures of redemption are stored for us. Only He can fill us with the knowledge of Him, and of His will. Only He can fill our lives with good works, with strength to endure, with thanksgiving. Only He is our righteousness, only He who is God can forgive sins.

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And so we are brought back to revel in the glory of God in the person of

Jesus Christ.

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God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:6)

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My dear friend, you need this knowledge, you need this holiness,

you need this strength, you need this
thanksgiving, you need this Savior.

You need to pray to this Savior.

Some will consider our prayer to
be filled with the knowledge of the
glory of God to be a sign of
ridiculous weakness, to be foolish.

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1 Corinthians 1:27 27 But God
chose what is foolish in the world
to shame the wise; God chose what
is weak in the world to shame the
strong;

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1 Corinthians 1:30-31 30 He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption. 31 Therefore, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

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Conclusion

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Then let us now pray to Him to be filled.