

Title: Paul's Pattern of Prayer

Text: Colossians 1:9-14

Introduction

Martyn Lloyd-Jones once said this:

“There is **no better index** of **one's spiritual state** and **condition** than **one's prayers**”.

Well, friends, **if this is so**:

- How do we *measure* up?
- What do **our prayers** *indicate* of our **current spiritual state**?

Friends, I **trust** that **all of us** here *do pray*. But may I ask ...

- **What** do **our prayers** *mostly* consist of?
- **What** are **some things** we *normally pray* for *daily*?

With that in mind, **ask ourselves**:

- **How** do **the things** that we **normally pray** for *measure up* with **the things** that **Paul** **normally prays** for?

Now, **listen** to **these words** from **D. A. Carson**. In his excellent book, *A Call to Spiritual Reformation* – *which I highly recommend by the way!* – **Carson** writes:

If the **center** of **our praying** is **far removed** from the **center** of **Paul's praying**, then even **our very praying** may **serve** as a **wretched testimony** to the **remarkable success** of the **processes** of **paganization** in **our life** and **thought**.¹

Well, friends, I'm **not sure about you**.

But I find **these words** both *convicting* and *indicting*.

For – if I'm honest – **my prayers** tend to be *a far cry* from that of **Paul's**.

From **the things** that **Paul normally** prays for.

But there's **hope** yet!

That – I believe – is **one** of the **reasons** why **God preserved** the **prayers of Paul** in the **pages of Scripture**.

It is to **serve** as an **example** / a **pattern** / a **model** of how we *can* – and *ought* to – **pray**.

And **what we have before us** this evening is **just one** of **Paul's many** prayers recorded in **Scripture**.

And it is a **prayer** which is both *informative* and *instructive*.

- It is *informative* in that it **provides** us with a **glimpse** of **Paul's pattern** of prayer.
- And it is *instructive* in that it **provides** us with a **helpful framework** of how we can **pray for one another**.

And that's **my aim** tonight.

- I want us to allow **Paul's prayer** to *inform* and *enrich* our **personal prayer life**.

So, my **main point** for this evening is this:

Pray for *right knowing* for the purpose of *right living*.

¹ D. A. Carson, *A Call to Spiritual Reformation: Priorities from Paul and His Prayers* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 2007), 96-97.

We'll **take each** of these **in turn** – and **consider**:

- *Firstly*, a **prayer** for *right knowing*.
- And, *secondly*, a **prayer** for *right living*.

So, *firstly*, a **prayer** for *right knowing* ...

1. A PRAYER FOR RIGHT KNOWING (v.9)

Look with me at **verse 9**:

“For this reason also, since the day we heard this, we haven’t stopped praying for you. We are asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding ...”

Well, friends, **before** we **dive** into the **actual content** of **Paul’s prayer**, I want to **briefly highlight two things** by way of **introduction**.

I want us to **notice**:

- (1) the **motivation** for Paul’s prayer, and
- (2) the **manner** of Paul’s prayer.

Notice, *firstly*, the **motivation** for Paul’s prayer.

The Motivation for Paul’s Prayer

Paul **begins** with the words **“for this reason”**.²

And this **begs** the question, **“For what reason?”**

- In other words, what *motivated* Paul to **pray**?
- What *stimulated* Paul to **pray**?

² Διὰ τοῦτο

Well, the words “**for this reason**” points us back to what came before in verses 3-8 – namely, Paul’s thankfulness for the good report that he had heard from Epaphras about the Colossians.

As we saw last time, Paul had **gospel gratitude** for God’s powerful work in the gospel both in the lives of the Colossians *and* throughout the world.

- And it is **precisely** because of the **gospel effect** in the lives of the Colossians that Paul felt led to pray.
- Paul was brought to his knees because he heard that **the gospel** had taken root – and, indeed, was bearing fruit – in their lives.

Now, I’m **not sure about you**. But I find this **interesting**. Just **think** about it:

- **When** are we most *inclined* to pray for others?
- Or **what** *motivates* us to pray for others?

My **guess** is that it is *usually* because of a pressing need or crisis.

- Perhaps **someone** is *sick*.
- Perhaps **someone** has a *job interview*.
- Or perhaps **someone** has *exams*.

Now, I’m **not** saying we *shouldn’t* pray for these things.

- It is *good* that we pray for these things!
- And we *should* pray for such things!

But what I want to **point out** is this:

- What motivated Paul to pray was *not primarily* because of **a need** or **crisis** – *but because of gospel fruit in the lives of believers.*

And this is **instructive**:

- For it teaches us that we should pray for one another *not only* when there is **a pressing need** *but even* when there are **signs of growth**.

In fact, **what Paul prays for the Colossians** are **things** that we *constantly* need as believers – and, thus, *should* constantly pray for one another as believers.

Well, *secondly*, let's look at the manner of Paul's prayer.

The Manner of Paul's Prayer

Verse 9 continues:

“For this reason also, since the day we heard this, we haven't stopped praying for you ...”.

In other words, **Paul's prayer for the Colossians** was both regular and persistent.

- Paul was unceasing / Paul was unrelenting in his prayer for them.
- From the first day Paul heard of their faith in Christ, he had been earnestly praying for them.

Such was **Paul's pastoral heart and concern** for the Colossians.

- For a church he had not planted.
- For a people he had not even met.

He prayed **regularly** for them.

He prayed **persistently** for them.

He prayed **fervently** for them.

And he **prayed** – *as we will soon see* – for **their spiritual well-being**.

So, a *good* – and perhaps *convicting* – question to ask ourselves at this juncture is this:

- How *regular* and *persistent* are we in our prayers for the spiritual well-being of our fellow believers?
- Do we pray for one another as *often* as we should? As *often* as Paul does?

I'm **not sure about you**, but **I know** that I've got *a lot* to learn from **Paul's pattern of prayer**!

So, with these **preliminary observations** in place, let's **look now** at the **content** of Paul's prayer.

What is it that **Paul** *regularly* and *consistently* prays for that we *can* – and *should* – *regularly* and *consistently* pray for one another?

The Content of Paul's Prayer

Well, let's read on in **verse 9**. Paul writes:

"We are asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will ..."

So, **what** is **Paul** praying for?

- Well, simply put, **Paul** is praying for *right knowing*.
- That **believers** may *know* **God's will** more fully.

Now, in the **context** of the **false teaching** that was **threatening** the **church** at **Colossae**, **Paul's prayer** here is both *strategic* and *specific*.

The **false teachers** – if you remember – were **telling** the **Colossians** that there is a "**deeper knowledge**" to be **gained**, a "**higher spirituality**" to be **attained**, and a "**new fullness**" to be **experienced** if they were but to **embrace their teaching** and **rituals**.

And, in so doing, **they** were – in essence – **downplaying** the *supremacy* and *sufficiency* of **Christ**.

Thus, **Paul** *strategically* and *specifically* prays that the **Colossians** may be "**filled**" with the "**knowledge**" – the ἐπίγνωσις – of **God's will**.

- **Paul** wants **them** to **know** – and **embrace** – **what is true**.
- That **Christ** – indeed – is *supreme* and *sufficient*.

So, just as **Paul's gospel gratitude** – *as we saw last time* – was meant to **lead** to their **spiritual fortitude** – *so here* – **Paul's prayerful attitude** was meant to **lead** to their **spiritual aptitude**.

Now – **sadly** – there are **some Christians today** who – for one reason or another – **downplay**, **diminish** – or even **despise** – **knowledge**.

In fact, **churches like ours** tend to get **criticised** for **having *too much* Bible!**

We are **deemed** to be:

- Too **academic**.
- Too **intellectual**.
- Too **cerebral**.
- And – might I add – too **un-spiritual**.

But, friends, **Paul** would have **none of that!**

- **Paul's prayer** is that **believers** may **KNOW** God's will **more fully**.
- That **believers** may **filled** with the **KNOWLEDGE** of God's will.

Paul is **convinced** that **believers** need to **KNOW** if they are to **GROW**.

And **Paul's concern** for **knowledge** is **evident** in **his prayers elsewhere** too.

Let me just give **two examples**:³

- **Philippians 1:9** – “*And I pray this: that your love will keep on growing in knowledge (ἐπίγνωσις) and every kind of discernment ...*”
- **Philemon 6** – “*I pray that your participation in the faith may become effective through knowing (ἐπίγνωσις) every good thing that is in us for the glory of Christ.*”

³ See also Eph 1:17

Paul thus – *clearly!* – deems **knowledge** *essential* – even *indispensable!* – in the Christian life.

And this is **important!** For we live in a **day** and **age** in which – *similar* to the Colossians – *false teaching* and *false gospels* abound.

So, Paul prays for **knowledge**.

- He wants **believers** to be **“filled with the knowledge of God’s will”**.
- He wants **believers** to be **influenced** and **controlled** by **“the knowledge of God’s will”**.⁴

Now, the **question** we **need to ask** is **this**:

- **What** – exactly – does **Paul** mean by **“God’s will”**?

And, here, we **need to be careful**. For it is **so easy** to **import** our **own idea** of **“God’s will”** into **the text**.

Just **think** about it: **What** do we *normally think* of when talking about **“God’s will”**?

- From **my experience** – or at least in **the circles** where I **used to come from** – we **tend** to *individualise* it.
- We **tend to associate** it with *discerning* the **“specific will”** of God for *our* lives.
- For example:
 - ***“Whom should I marry?”***
 - ***“Where should I live?”***
 - ***“What job should I take?”***
- And so forth.

But we need to **ask**: Is that **what Paul means** when he **prays** that **we** may be **filled** with the **knowledge** of **“God’s will”**?

Answer: **No!** **μη γένοιτο!** **By no means!**

⁴ Cf. Eph 5:18

While we should seek God's wisdom for such decisions, that's not what Paul has in mind here.

- Nowhere in Scripture are we told to discern the secret or decretive will of God.
- Instead, what Paul has in mind here is that of the revealed or preceptive will of God.

Paul is praying that we may have a growing understanding / an ever-deepening grasp of what God has revealed in his Word.

- And this includes who God is ... as well as ...
- ... what God has done – is doing – and will do in Christ.⁵

As Paul puts it in Ephesians 1:9-10:

“[God] made known to us the mystery of his will ... [and what is that?] ... to bring everything together in Christ, both things in heaven and things on earth in him”.

In other words, “the will of God” that Paul wants believers to be filled with includes his cosmic plan to *“bring everything together in Christ”*.

- It is so that we may know our part to play – to borrow the words of Kevin Vanhoozer – in the “theodrama” of redemption.
- That is, what God has done – is doing – and will do in Christ – and how we should live in light of it.

And this will of God is revealed *primarily* in the Word of God. In the Scriptures.

Thus, we are to be a people of the Word.

- We need to *read* it.
- We need to *study* it.
- We need to be so *saturated* by it that what Spurgeon once said of John Bunyan may also be true of us – that when people prick us anywhere, we bleed “Bibline”.

⁵ For the most immediate context, see Col 1:15-23.

So, a **good question** to **ask ourselves** at **this juncture** would be:

- **How much time** do we **spend** in **God's Word**? In *reading* it? In *studying* it?
- Are we **growing** in the **knowledge of God's will** as **revealed** in **his Word**?
- Do we **know our part** in the "*theodrama*"?

And it is *specifically* in relation to **this last question** that – I believe – **Paul adds the words**:

"... in *all wisdom* and *spiritual understanding* ..."

In other words, **Paul** is **not** praying for knowledge that is merely *theoretical* – but for knowledge that is *practical*.

Paul is praying ...

- For **knowledge** that is *applied*.
- For **knowledge** that **enables** us to *navigate* through the **complexities of life**.
- For **knowledge** that **equips** us to **play our part** in the "*theodrama*".

And **this** "*wisdom*" and "*understanding*" comes about *only* by means of the Holy Spirit. It is *given* by the Spirit – as the adjective "*spiritual*" implies.

The Holy Spirit is the *source* of this God-given wisdom and understanding – which **enables** us to *apply* the knowledge of God's will in our lives.

That's why **Paul prays** – and he **prays constantly** – that **God** would "*fill*" believers with "*the knowledge of his will*". That **God** would **help** us *understand* and *apply* his will in our lives.

And **this** is **something** that **we** – likewise! – **should constantly pray** for one another.

Let's **pray** that we may *know rightly* ...

- So that we may *not* be deceived by false teaching.⁶

⁶ Col 2:8

- So that we may *not* be conformed to the pattern of this world.⁷
- So that we may play our part in the “*theodrama*”.

So, Paul prays for right knowing. But he doesn’t stop there. Paul also prays – *secondly* – for right living.

2. A PRAYER FOR RIGHT LIVING (vv.10-14)

Look with me at verse 10a:

“... *so that* you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him ...”.

What this tells us is that the purpose of Paul’s prayer for right knowing is that of right living.

In other words, Paul’s prayer for right knowing is *not* an end in and of itself.

- It is not knowledge for knowledge’s sake.
- It is a means to an end.
- And the end is that of right living.

In Paul’s mind:

- Right knowing is meant to lead to right living.
- Orthodoxy should lead to orthopraxy.
- Doctrine should lead to devotion.

And this – it seems – is in direct contrast to the quest for “deeper knowledge” as espoused by the false teachers.

- Unlike “the knowledge of God’s will” which is concrete and practical – that is, with the goal of walking worthy of and pleasing God ...

⁷ Rom 12:2

- The “**deeper knowledge**” promoted by the false teachers was merely **speculative** and **theoretical**.

Paul thus prays that believers may be “**filled with the knowledge of God’s will**” ... [WHY?] ... **so that** they may be able to “**walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him**”.⁸

Now, the **order** of Paul’s prayer is significant:

- For ***not only*** does it teach us that we need to **know rightly** if we are to **live rightly**.
- It ***also*** teaches us that **right knowing** is for the purpose of **right living**.

One is the **prerequisite** of the other.

One should **lead to** the other.

- For **knowing without living** is ... **pharisaical** ... or **hypocritical**.⁹
- And **living without knowing** is ... **farcical** ... or **comical**.¹⁰
- But **knowing that leads to living** is ... **scriptural** ... or **biblical**.¹¹

So, Paul prays for a **right knowing** that leads to **right living**.

For the truth is this:

- We **can’t walk worthily** of the Lord if we do **not know** how he would have us walk.
- And we **can’t please** God if we do **not know** what pleases him.

Think about it:

- **Husbands:** How would your wife *feel* if you woke up early in the morning to prepare her a sumptuous spread ... *bacon, sausages, steak, and the lot?*
- And then you surprise her when she wakes up by saying, “Enjoy this lovely breakfast, my dear!”
- Only problem ... Your wife ... is *a vegan!*

⁸ Cf. Phil 1:9-10

⁹ Luke 6:46

¹⁰ Hosea 4:6

¹¹ Rom 12:2; James 1:22-25

- Now, would **your wife** be *pleased* by **your actions**?
- **I don't think so!!!**

Bottom line?

- We must **know rightly** if we are to **live rightly!**

In other words, to **live rightly**, we must **know** what **God** requires of us / **what God's will** is for us.

And this is *precisely* what **Paul** is **praying** for:

- **He prays** that **believers** may be **filled** with **"the knowledge of God's will"** so that **they** may **"walk worthy of the Lord"**.

That's the **heartbeat** of the **apostle of God** for the **people of God**.

Now, **in light of** what we've said about the **inseparability** of **right knowing** and **right living**, it might be **worth asking** ourselves **two questions**. For **our tendency** is to **fall** into **one of two extremes**:

- So, for the **'THEOLOGICAL TOMS'** out there, **ask** ourselves:
 - Does our **right knowing** result in **right living**?
 - Are we being **transformed** – and not merely **informed**?
- And for the **'PRAGMATIC PHILIPS'** out there, **ask** ourselves:
 - Does our **right living** stem from **right knowing**?
 - Are our **actions** informed by **knowledge**?

Friends, **the thing** is this: We need **both** if we are to **"walk worthy of the Lord"**.

Now, **what** does it **mean** to **"walk WORTHY of the Lord"**?

Well, let's look at **what it is not** – before looking at **what it is**.

What we need to **understand** is that:

- “**Walking worthy of the Lord**” is **not** about us **living in a way** that **makes us worthy** before God.
- It is **not** about us **living in a way** that **earns us merit** before God / that **earns us** the *love* or *favor* of God.

The **fact** is that **none of us** are **worthy of God**.¹²

In fact, **even** when **we've done all that we were commanded**, we are – as Jesus puts it – but **unworthy servants**” who have **only done our duty**.¹³

So, if that's **not** what “**walking worthy**” means, **what** then **does** it mean?

Well, **Paul spells it out** in **verse 10**. He continues:

“... **fully pleasing** to him ...”.

In other words, a life **worthy** of the Lord is a life that is **pleasing** to him.

- It is a life that is *lived* for the pleasure of God.¹⁴
- It is a life that is *befitting* of a child of God.
- It is a life that *displays* the supreme worth, beauty, and value of God.

We want to *please* him. We want to *honour* him. We want to *delight* him in every way.

- In our **thinking**.
- In our **speech**.
- In our **conduct**.

¹² Rom 3:10, 23

¹³ Luke 17:10

¹⁴ 2 Cor 5:9

And that's *precisely* what Paul is **praying for**.

And **that's what** we *ought* to pray for **one another**.

- We are to **pray** for *right knowing* that *leads* to *right living*.
- That we may *“walk worthy”* of God.
- That we may *“please”* God.

Now, **all of this** is *well* and *good*.

- But **what** does **such a life** *look like* in practice?
- **What** does it *look like* in concrete terms?

Well, Paul does **not** leave us hanging. He **fleshes out** what *“a worthy walk”* / what *“a life pleasing to God”* *looks like* with four participles in verses 10-12:

- **“bearing fruit”** (v.10)
- **“growing”** (v.10)
- **“being strengthened”** (v.11)
- **“giving thanks”** (v.12)

That's **what Paul wants** for the Colossians.

That's **what** a *worthy walk* / a *life pleasing to God* *looks like*.

So, let's just **briefly run through** these.

a. Abundant Fruitfulness (v.10b)

Firstly, a life worthy of and pleasing to God is one that *bears abundant fruit*.

Look at **verse 10b**:

“... bearing fruit in every good work ...”

And, friends, that's what **we've been created to do!**

Ephesians 2:8-10 tells us that while we are *not* saved by good works, we are saved for good works.

And **not just that!**

What we need to **understand** as well is that **fruit-bearing is** – and *should be* – the *natural by-product* of the Christian life.

- In other words, there is **no such thing** as a *fruitless* Christian.
- It's a **contradiction in terms!**

As **Jesus** puts it in **Matthew 12:33**:

“Either make the tree good and its fruit will be good, or make the tree bad and its fruit will be bad; for a tree is known by its fruit.”

In other words, as the gospel takes root in our lives, we should see its fruit in our lives.¹⁵

- We will *grow* in **Christlikeness**.
- We will *grow* in **Christian love**.
- We will *grow* in **Christian service**.

Simply put, gospel root should *lead* to gospel fruit.

And our fruitfulness in good works pleases God ... [WHY?] ... because it brings glory to God.¹⁶

As **Jesus** commands us in **Matthew 5:16**:

¹⁵ Gal 5:22-23; cf. Col 1:3-6

¹⁶ John 15:8

*“In the same way, **let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.**”*

Friends, may we – by *the grace of God* – bear much fruit to *the glory of God*!

b. Increased Knowledge (v.10c)

Secondly, a life worthy of and pleasing to God is one that increases in the knowledge of God.

Verse 10 continues:

“... and growing in the knowledge of God”

Now, this is **interesting**. For, here, we come **full cycle**, so to speak!

- Remember: **Paul** had **prayed** that **believers** would be *filled* with **the knowledge of God’s will** (v.9).
- And **this knowledge of God’s will** is *so that they may walk worthy of and please God* (v.10).
- And, now, **Paul** is saying that **such a life manifests itself** in a growing knowledge of **God** (v.10).

Do you see **the cycle**? Not a *vicious* cycle but a *virtuous* cycle.

And it is an **interesting dynamic** of the **Christian life**.

One **hinted** by **Jesus** in **John 7:17** – where **he said**:

*“If anyone wants to **do** [God’s] will, he will **know** whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own.”*

In other words, **Jesus** is saying that our **DOING** of God’s will *leads to* our **KNOWING** of God’s will.

So, while it is **true** that *right knowing* leads to *right doing*, it is **also true** that *right doing* leads to *right knowing*. Or – should I say – *increased knowing*.

- As we *know* what God has revealed in his Word and *do* it, it leads to an increased – and more intimate – *knowledge* of God and his will.
- And **this** – in turn – **spurs us to** *greater obedience*, which – in turn – **brings us to an** *even greater knowledge* of God and his will.

It's like a 'snowballing' effect – where the snowball becomes **larger and larger** as it **accumulates** more and more snow as it **progresses** along the path.

- It's an *ever-deepening* cycle.
- A cycle in which we are – *slowly* but *surely* – being **conformed to the image of Christ**.¹⁷

And **this brings glory** – and *pleasure* – to God!

c. Divine Empowerment (v.11)

Thirdly, a life worthy of and pleasing to God is one that is *empowered by God*.

Look at verse 11:

“... *being strengthened* with *all power*, according to *his glorious might*”

In other words, “a worthy walk” / “a life pleasing to God” is one that is *dependent* upon – one that *leans* upon – the power of God.

- It is a life that is **not self-sufficient** but *God-dependent*.
- It is a life that **realises our utter impotency** *apart from God*.

As Jesus reminds us in John 15:5:

¹⁷ Rom 8:28; 2 Cor 3:18

*“I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because **you can do nothing without me.**”*

Notice – *by the way* – the explicit purpose of this **divine empowerment** in verse 11:

- It is **not** so that we may **perform signs and wonders**.
- It is **not** so that we may **have our best life now**.
- No! It **is** so that we may have **“great endurance”** and **“patience”**.

And **why** do we need **these traits**?

Well, I believe we need **“endurance”** and **“patience”** because of **the three enemies of our soul**.

- **The world.**
- **The flesh.**
- **The devil.**

Friends, the **truth** is we *cannot* live the **Christian life** *apart from* the **power of God**.

- It is ***impossible!***
- **Left to our own devices**, we are *weak, pitiful, and frail*.

We need God’s power:

- If we are to ***bear fruit*** in **every good work**.
- If we are to ***resist*** the **temptations and trials of life**.
- If we are to ***persevere*** in **the faith**.

To put it simply:

- A life that is ***dependent*** upon the **power of God** is ***pleasing*** to **God**.

Why? Because it brings ***glory*** to **God**.

As **John Piper** so aptly puts it:

“The giver gets the glory ... We get the help; he gets the glory.”

Or as **Peter** puts it in **1 Peter 4:11**:

*“... if anyone **serves**, let it be from **the strength God provides**, ... [WHY?] ... so that **God may be glorified through Jesus Christ in everything ...**”*

Friends, that’s **the heart of God for the people of God** – namely, that **we show him** to be **supreme** and **sufficient** in all things.

d. Joyful Gratitude (vv.12-14)

Fourthly – and finally – **a life worthy of and pleasing to God** is one that is **marked by joyful gratitude to God**.

Look at **verse 12**:

“... joyfully giving thanks to the Father ...”

Friends, **do we realise** that – as believers – **we of all people ought** to be the **most joyful and thankful**?

Why?

- Well, **simply because of the gospel!**
- Because of **what God has done for us in Christ!**

Let’s read on in **verses 12-14**:

“... joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the saints’ inheritance in the light. He has rescued us from the domain of darkness

and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son he loves. In him we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

Friends, I’m **not sure** if you **noticed** – but exodus imagery permeates this **text**!

Perhaps the **closest parallel** I can think of is **Exodus 6:6-8**.

Listen to what God instructs Moses to tell the Israelites who were then in slavery to Egypt:

*“Therefore tell the Israelites: **I am the LORD**, and I will bring you out from the forced labor of the Egyptians and rescue you from slavery to them. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and great acts of judgment. I will take you as my people, and I will be your God. You will know that **I am the LORD** your God, who brought you out from the forced labor of the Egyptians. I will bring you to the land that I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD.”*

Friends, **do you see the parallels?**

So, what **Paul** is **implying** here is that ...

- Just as **the Israelites** were “rescued” from **slavery in Egypt** – so too have **we** been “rescued” from **slavery to sin**.
- Just as **the Israelites** have been “transferred” into **the Promised Land** – so too have **we** been “transferred” into **the kingdom of the Son he loves**.

Friends, **this is amazing!**

And **this** should be **cause for perpetual joy and gratitude in our lives!**

Now, perhaps **some of you** may **remember** the **amazing rescue** of **33 miners** in **Chile** in **2010**.¹⁸ In fact, **so amazing** was **the rescue** that it was even made into a film!

- Well, **what happened** was that in **August 5th**, a **mine collapsed** – leaving **33 miners** **trapped 800 meters underground**.
- And **these miners** were **trapped *not* for one week. *Not* for two weeks. But for almost *ten* weeks! 69 days** to be exact!
- **Imagine** being **trapped underground** for **69 days!** **Hopes of survival** were **bleak** – to say the least!
- **However** – against all odds! – on **October 13th**, **all 33 of the miners** were **rescued!** One-by-one, **they** were **carried to safety!**
- Now, **this** was a **rescue operation** that **captured worldwide interest and attention**.
- And **one** can **almost tangibly feel** the **sense of joy and jubilation** as **each of the miners** were **brought to safety** – and **reunited** with their **families and friends**.
- **These miners** had been **rescued from the jaws of certain death!**
- And **that explains** the **unrestrained joy and euphoria** that **accompanied** the **rescue!**

Now, friends, **what I want us to understand** is this: *Before* we came to Christ, our **plight** was **much more severe** and *hopeless* than **that of the miners**.

- **We** were **dead** in our **trespasses and sins**.¹⁹
- **We** were **enemies of God**.²⁰
- **We** were **children of wrath**.²¹
- **We** were **without hope** and **without God**.²²

And, friends, **it is only when we *understand* the desperate condition that we were once in that we can** – like the miners – *appreciate* the magnitude and wonder of the **salvation** that **we now have in Christ**.

¹⁸ Source: <https://edition.cnn.com/2013/07/13/world/americas/chilean-mine-rescue/index.html>

¹⁹ Eph 2:1

²⁰ Rom 5:10

²¹ Eph 2:3

²² Eph 2:12

To put it differently: The *deeper* we go in our understanding of our depravity and what God has done for us in Christ, the *higher* we will soar on wings of adoration and thanksgiving to God!

Friends – as believers – we have a **profound reason** to be **joyful** and **thankful**!

This is because – **by virtue of Christ’s work on the cross** – we have experienced a new and greater exodus!

- We who were **once far off** have **now** been **brought near** by the **blood of Christ**.²³
- We who were **once strangers and aliens** have **now** been **made citizens** of the **kingdom of God**.²⁴
- We who were **once unqualified** have **now** been **qualified** to **share** in the **inheritance of the people of God**.²⁵
- We have – as **Paul** puts it in **verse 14** – been “**redeemed**” and “**forgiven**” in **Christ**!

And, friends, as we **consider** the great salvation that we have in **Christ**, our *only* appropriate response should be that of humble and joyful gratitude to **God** for what he has done!

In fact, **this** is **what** we will be singing for all eternity!²⁶

Conclusion

So, friends, **that** – in a nutshell – is **what a worthy walk / what a life pleasing to God looks like**!

- A life that *bears fruit* in every good work.
- A life that *grows* in the knowledge of God.
- A life that is *strengthened* by God’s power.
- And a life that is **filled** with *joyful gratitude* to **God** for what he has done.

²³ Eph 2:13

²⁴ Eph 2:19

²⁵ Col 1:12

²⁶ Rev 7:9-10

That's what Paul is praying for the Colossians.

And that's what we can pray for one another – namely:

- That we may **know rightly** ...
- So that we may **live rightly**.

Friends, **the thing** is this:

- **Prayer is one of God's good gifts to us.**
- **It is a means by which he accomplishes his purposes in the lives of his people.**

So, **why not** we **seize this tremendous privilege** – and **commit ourselves to pray for one another regularly**:

- That we may be “**filled**” with “**the knowledge of God's will**”.
- **So that** we may “**walk in a manner worthy of**” and “**pleasing to God**”.
- **In a way that attests** to the **utter supremacy and sufficiency of Christ!**

Let's pray.