

Colossians 1 v 9 - 12

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[0 : 00] If you would like to have your Bibles open to Colossians chapter 1, we began studying this letter together last Sunday night and we're going to, God willing, over the next several weeks, be working our way through this wonderful letter, a letter to God's people.

Remember we looked there last week that Paul calls Christians saints, not because they're perfect, not because they're super, duper in that sense, but a saint according to the Bible is not some dead person who is given the title saint, but saint is somebody who has been set apart for God, who belongs to God.

That's the sense of the word holy, to be set apart, belonging to God, brought into relationship with him, made one of his children, brought into his family, one of his people.

And so we're going to continue from where we left, we managed to get through to verse 8 last week and we're going to look briefly now at verses 9 through to at least the first part of verse 12.

As I was growing up at home, there was always a barometer in our hallway and since I've grown up and got my own home, there's always been a barometer in my hallway and one of the things that I always do, because I saw my dad do it and my granddad do it before him, I always give it a tap every morning to see which way the weather's going to go.

[1 : 26] Hopefully it's going to go towards fair and then if it goes towards stormy or rain, I'm a bit upset about that. But a barometer, of course, measures the pressure, the air pressure.

Underneath it, of course, is a little thermometer to tell me how warm it is or cold it is in the house. And those of us, perhaps who are old enough, can remember when we had to go and have our temperature taken by the doctor.

You put one of those glass little thermometers under your tongue. You don't, of course, get that anymore now. You get a sort of a gun that zaps you in the ear to tell you if your temperature's good or not.

And there's lots of different things that we measure. We measure temperature. We measure pressure in the air. We measure ingredients for the cake we're baking. We measure our speed and so on.

Everything is measured and we have instruments for doing that. But as Christians, of course, one of the things that we are concerned about, one of the things that we should seek to know the status of, if I can put it that way, is our spiritual health, our spiritual temperature, if I can put it that way.

[2 : 29] And how do we do that? How do we know if we are up to speed? How do we know if our temperature is right? How do we know if, as Christians, we really are in a good spiritual state?

We can't measure it by the attendance we have at church. We can't measure it by the degrees we have after our name in theology. We can't measure it by the amount of Bible we read.

But there is, I believe, one thing that, above all else, indicates how closely we are walking with God and what is the love of our hearts.

And that is prayer. Prayer. Now, we know the Apostle Paul because he was a quite amazing man.

He was a man who accomplished wonderful things. He was a missionary pioneer going to places that no one had gone before to take the gospel. He was a church planter establishing churches in these places and appointing people to lead them.

[3 : 33] He was a miracle worker that God used to raise people from the dead and to heal. And he was a man who did all sorts of great things. But, preeminently, we see here that he was a man of prayer.

In virtually every one of his letters, it's plain that this is the case. Whenever he writes to believers, wherever they are, he always begins by mentioning that he is praying for them.

Here in Colossians, back in Philippians, In all my prayers, chapter 1, for all of you, I always pray with joy. Ephesians, chapter 1, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.

1 Thessalonians, chapter 1, the same thing. To Timothy, he writes as well in his second letter, praying for you, praying for you, praying for you. And here in Colossians, we've already noticed at the start in verse 3 that he's given thanks to God for what God has been doing in their lives.

He's already praying to God with thanksgiving. But now we come to verse 9, and we're told again that he is praying. For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you.

[4 : 47] Now, prayer, I say, is the measure of the Christian. We sang in that wonderful hymn, prayer is the Christian's vital breath, the Christian's native air. It's something that Christians do.

It's something that comes naturally to us as Christians. It's something which is not natural to the non-Christian. To the non-Christian, prayer is a strange thing. It's a forced thing. It's something which has to be done by rote.

It has to be done religiously. It has to be done with set words. But the Christian is someone who prays from the heart. But what is it about prayer that, as it were, reveals our temperature?

What is it about our prayers that show that we are walking with the Lord and living for him? Well, clearly it's the content of our prayers.

What is it that we're praying for? What is it that we're praying about? Now, we've seen, as I said, that Paul is praying for and praying about what God has done in the Colossians' life.

[5 : 51] He says, we thank God when we pray for you, verse 3, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, of the love you have for the saints. And he goes on, the faith that love that spring from the hope that is stood up for you.

And I looked and I said that those three characteristics of the Christian are, in one sense, the hallmarks of God's work. They're his fingerprints on the Christian. If we have faith in Christ, if we have a love for God's people, if we have a hope in life everlasting, that shows that God has done a work in us, that he has worked by his Spirit in our lives to change us and to transform us and give to us these gifts.

But that's not the end. Though God has begun a good work in us, that's not the end of the matter. Faith, love and hope are the beginning of his work. And so we see here that Paul goes on.

I'm thankful, he says to God, for what he's done and thankful for the gospel and the work it's done in your life. But he says, I'm going to go on praying and I'm going to not stop praying for these things to be added to your life.

Because of what he's heard that God has begun to do, he asks for more. Dear friends, let me assure you that you can never ask too much of God. You can never ask too much from God.

[7 : 14] And in fact, I would say this, that dear friends, we should ask much more from God than we do. He does not want to be stingy with us.

He does not want to be withholding from us. Our God is not a tight-fisted God. He is a generous God who longs to, delights to, give good gifts to his children.

And so when Paul is praying, he's encouraging us and the believers there to keep on asking for more from God. Let us never get to that place, dear friends, where we say, I'm content with what God has done.

That's enough for me. Now it's wonderful what he's done. If God did nothing more than save us and forgive us and give us a home in heaven, then he would have done more than we could ever for all eternity, praise him for.

But God is not finished. He wants to keep on giving. And he wants us to be hungry for more of his grace at work in our lives and in the lives of others too.

[8 : 13] Here's Peter as he writes his second letter. Listen to what he says. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness, to goodness knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, to brotherly kindness love.

For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, increasing measure, they'll keep you from being ineffective and unproductive. Isn't that wonderful?

God wants us to keep on growing. He wants us to keep on increasing. He wants to keep on pouring out grace into our lives so that we continue to go forward.

Dear friends, as Christians, we are on a pilgrimage. But in one sense, it's a pilgrimage over sinking sand. If we stop, we sink. If we keep going, we stay upright.

We all know that, don't we? We've all had something of that experience where in our Christian life, things have started to go a bit stale. We've forgotten to pray or been negligent of prayer.

[9 : 17] We've been busy with so many things. Well, what has happened? We've found ourselves sinking. Like Peter coming out of the boat. Walk to me, says Jesus. So Peter starts. And what's he doing? He stops looking at Jesus.

He stops walking. And he sinks. I wonder if that's something of your experience today. I feel, Lord, like I'm sinking in life.

But here is Paul. And he prays for them. And he prays for them the sort of things that we can pray for ourselves. And also the things that we are to pray for one another.

Especially for the family of God, our local church. So what is it he prays for? Well, he begins by praying for knowledge. That's what he says there in verse 9.

We have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will. This is much more than him simply asking that God should reveal his will to them for their lives.

[10 : 19] That can be something that we are very concerned about, rightly so. We pray, Lord, what is your will for me in this job situation? What is your will for me in this relationship that I'm in?

I'm going out with somebody. Should I marry them? Shouldn't I marry them? What should I do? And so on. But that isn't primarily what he's praying for. He's praying for something much bigger than that.

He's praying that we should know all of God's will. We should have a comprehension of God's big picture. That we should have a comprehension of what God is doing in this world. What is his plan of salvation?

What are his purposes for his church in this world? He wants us to grasp the scope of what God has done and what God is doing and what God will do.

Again, one of the things is, isn't it, in our prayer life, and I confess this is myself as well, we can just be there. It's just these things that concern me that I'm praying about.

[11 : 17] But here he's saying, I want you to be filled. Do you know that? I want you to fill you with the knowledge of his will. Fill you. So that it may be something which truly you grasp and comprehend.

Yes, we do want to know his will for our lives. It's right that we do. As a Christian, it's right that we should want to say, Lord, what is it you want me to do? How can I live for you today? How can I glorify you in this situation?

But it begins, dear friends. If we want to know God's will for our lives, it begins with this desire that we might know more of his greater will.

You see, the wonderful thing is that every one of us, we have been saved to be part of God's great plan for the whole world.

You know, I don't want to trivialize this in any way, but I want us to get hold of it. No matter who we are as Christians, God has saved us and brought us into this wonderful relationship with himself.

[12 : 20] Not only that he might bring us to heaven and into a relationship with him, but he wants to fulfill his purposes for this world in and through you. That's amazing, isn't it? We're not one person insignificant.

It's like stripping an engine apart from your car. You know, if you went to your mechanic and he said, oh, I've got a bit of a problem with your car, and I've stripped the engine down, I've taken it all apart, I've put it back together.

Here's a bag of bits I've got left over. You wouldn't be too happy about that, would you? Well, aren't those bits important? Well, not really. Yes, of course they are.

And in one sense, this great, wonderful scheme of God means that you and I and every single believer is part of that. Part of that plan to bring his church into salvation, to bring those that Christ died for to himself.

Let's never downplay the place that we have. This is, again, when we come back to Paul and the body of Christ in 1 Corinthians, each part doing its bits.

[13 : 22] This is why, again, it's so important that we're part of a local church, why we're committed to one another, that we might fulfill that ministry he's given us. But notice as well that this knowledge that he wants us to be filled with comes through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Spiritual wisdom and understanding. It's not something that we naturally have. Even when we become Christians, we don't immediately get filled with all the knowledge of God, do we? It's amazing, isn't it?

When you become a Christian, you know nothing. You just know you're a sinner. Christ died for you. That's all you need to know. And you put your faith in him. And there's a wonderful transformation that takes place.

But it's the beginning of changing, of transforming, of new avenues being opened to us, new horizons being seen. And so this is the work of the spirit.

Spiritual wisdom, spiritual understanding. Not human wisdom, nor human understanding. That's why so many people sadly get so wrong. Because they say, well, I'm going to look at this Bible.

[14 : 29] I'm going to treat it like any other book. I'm going to pull it apart. I'm going to study it. I'm going to learn Greek and Hebrew and all those things. And they will never get to the knowledge of the will of God. Because it's spiritually given.

Paul, as he writes to the Christians in Rome in chapter 12, tells them how something of this wisdom and understanding is given to us.

He says, do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world. In other words, the mold of this world's thinking. But be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is.

His good, pleasing, and perfect will. There's a renewing work that's going on in our minds. A transformation and a change that's taking place. That we might know God's will.

Test it. And understand his good, pleasing, perfect will. The mind, you see, is so vitally important. Dear friends, when you become a Christian, you don't give up thinking.

[15 : 30] You don't, as somebody put it, leave your brain at the door of the church when you go in. A Christian is somebody who thinks. Thinks seriously about the things of God.

Who thinks seriously about the Christian life. We are to think and to use our minds. Paul makes it very clear that the mind is a very, very important part of who we are. The mind can be used against God or for God.

Notice what he says later in chapter 1. Verse 21. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds. Hold on. I thought sin was of the heart and the soul.

No. Enemies in your minds. He goes on as well. Chapter 2 in verse 18. He says, Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify for you for the prize.

Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen and his unspiritual mind puffs up idle notions. So the mind directs people away from God.

[16 : 34] In opposition to God. But later on we see the importance of the mind again. Chapter 3 verse 2. Set your minds on things above. Not on things below.

We are to be spiritually heavenly minded. So Paul is praying for knowledge. How does God answer that prayer? We have said it is spiritual wisdom and understanding. We are to sort of meditate.

Just wait for it to fall into our heads. No it isn't like that is it? It's not like that. Rather it is that God answers this prayer by instructing us and teaching us through his word.

Paul again writing of just a bit later on. 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. To the believers there. 1 Thessalonians 4 verses 1 to 3. Notice what he says to them here.

Finally brothers. We instructed you how to live in order to please God. As in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more.

[17 : 35] For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. This is how we are to know God's will.

By the scriptures. He says later in Colossians. As we will come to later on chapter 3. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach. And admonish one another with all wisdom.

So as believers we have been given God's word. And by the Spirit's help we are to teach ourselves and one another. We are to listen to the instructions of God.

And by that we are to know his will. And so the answer to our prayers and to Paul's prayer is the letter he's written. Isn't it? The letter he's written.

I pray that you might know God's will for you. Now I'm going to tell you what it is. By the Spirit we understand these things. That's why of course when Jesus promised his disciples. He said I've got so much more to tell you.

[18 : 34] But you can't take it in just yet. But I'm going to send you the Spirit of truth. He will reveal to you. Who are these people that the Holy Spirit revealed these things to?

The apostles who give us New Testament. And so it is the word. And as the word. As we read the word. Depend upon the Holy Spirit. We grow in the knowledge of his will.

Well that's great. That's the first part of the prayer. That we might have knowledge. But what good is knowledge? In and of itself. Well it's not a lot of good is it?

In and of itself. Unless there is a point to that knowledge. What are we to make. And to do with God's will. When we know it. Here we are. Verse 10. We pray this.

I.e. that you should have knowledge. We pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord. Aha. That's why we're to know God's will. That's why we're to study his word.

[19 : 30] That's why we're to pray in this way. That we might. That we may live worthy. See there's a purpose when we pray. There's an end result when we pray.

Prayer is like a ball kicked at the goal. It's like an arrow shot at a target. It always has an aim in view. We don't just pray. You know. We don't just pray rubbish I hope.

We don't just pray words. There's an aim in what we're praying. There's a purpose in what we're praying. We're looking for something to happen. And we're aiming at a target. Now when we pray of course there's great comfort in prayer.

As we pour out our hearts to the Lord. There's great sense of peace. When we pray we have a deeper fellowship with the Lord. And that's true. But we see here as well.

That in asking and requesting from God. We're asking something that will make a difference in our lives. That will bring a result in our lives and the lives of others. And so Paul prays for three things.

[20 : 31] He says I want you to have this knowledge. So that three things may take place in your life. That your life may first of all. Be a life lived worthy of the Lord. You and I bear the name of Jesus Christ.

We are Christians. We wear his name wherever we go. People know that we are Christians. That we are Christ's people. Now that name that we carry is a great honour.

A great honour. And how we live reflects upon his name. We are Christ's ambassadors. We're told elsewhere. We're his representatives in our community.

In our workplace. In our home. What we do and how we live will either glorify Jesus Christ. Or bring ridicule to his name. It's a serious thing isn't it?

To be a Christian and to call yourself a Christian. When we think about how the world latches on. Somebody who uses the name Christian. And acts in a moral way.

[21 : 31] Or a way in which they steal money from something. Or in which they bring dishonour. And the world loves that. Because it brings dishonour upon the name of Christ.

And upon his church. But dear friends. When we love the Lord Jesus Christ. When we love his name. How sweet the name of Jesus sounds.

Then dear friends. We will do all that we can to protect the honour of his name. We will want to live a life which is honouring to him. And that brings glory to him. This is what Paul is praying.

Pray that you might live worthily of the Lord. That you might bring honour to him. There's a second thing here. That you might please him. How can we live a life worthy to the Lord? Well we live a life worthily of him.

When we please him in every way. Please him in every way. When we live for the Lord Jesus in that way. To bring honour to him. We're not trying to buy his favour.

[22 : 28] We're not living this life in some way. We're trying to please him by works. Or earn his grace in some way. No. Again. This is the outcome of a life that loves him. That loves him.

We please the one that we love. Thought about that the other week. Didn't we? We please the one that we love. We don't do it because we must. We do it because we can. Because we want to.

It's our desire. There's no restriction upon the Christian in that sense. The law for the Christian is a wonderful thing. Why? Because it's what pleases God.

And we love God and we want to please him. So the law is great. We don't see it as a burden. The world says there's a Christian. Oh how awful to be a Christian. All those rules and regulations.

And all those laws that you've got to keep. Do this. Don't do that. Do this. Don't do that. The Christian looks on the law of God and says. Wow. I can do this and please God. I can do that.

[23 : 28] And I can bring joy to him. It's a difference in the world isn't it? Pleasing him. And again. Notice this. Please him in every way.

Paul's not saying we only please God when we do the religious things. When we pray or read our Bible or go to church. Or when we do evangelism. Those are the things that please God. But the rest of the things that you do.

Well you don't need to worry about whether they please God or not. No. He's saying this. In everything that we do. We can bring pleasure to God in every way. All that we do can please him.

Whether it's washing up on a Sunday morning. The tea and coffee cups. Whether it's going to work. Into an environment which we find difficult. Whether it's looking after someone elderly and caring for them.

It doesn't matter what we're doing. It can be out fishing. He says. Hooray. Out fishing. Don't catch any fish much. You can do anything. And do it in a way that is pleasing the Lord.

[24 : 28] In every way. Remember again dear friends. We thought about this the other way. There's no secular or sacred divide in life. You know we're not doing the sacred thing on Sunday.

We're doing the secular thing on Monday. There's no such thing for the Christian. We've been brought into the kingdom of God. Which we'll think a lot about more next week God willing. And we've been brought into this place where everything. Every part of our lives.

Is lived for his glory. Every part of our lives can bring him glory as well. Here's Paul giving some instructions to slaves. It bears very much with those of us who are employed.

He says this. Serve wholeheartedly as if you were serving the Lord. Not man. Because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does.

Whether he's slave or free. When you go to work tomorrow. You are going to work for the Lord. You're going to work for him. It doesn't matter who your overseer is.

[25 : 29] Or who your line manager is. Or any of those things. Ultimately of all of them is the Lord. God. And he wants you to live and to serve him. In whatever that is.

And please him. And then we see as well. That he wants something else. As we live worthily. As we live to please the Lord in everything. What happens? We bear fruit.

In every good work. We don't just live to please God. Thank God that we can do that. There's something more than that. There's a motivation beyond that.

There's tangible results. Fruit. That's something real isn't it? That's something that can be seen and tasted and touched. That's something that actually exists.

It can be recognized. We bear fruit. This is what Jesus' great desire was. For us and for his disciples. As he spoke to them on that night. Before his death.

[26 : 28] John 15. This is what he said. This is to my father's glory. That you bear much fruit. Showing yourselves to be my disciples. Again verse 16 of John 15.

You did not choose me. But I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit. Fruit that will last. We're to be fruitful Christians. There's a product for living for Christ.

There's an end result. There's something to be seen. It's not just done under the eye of the Lord. And he's pleased with it. He is. But. When we live in this way.

Something happens. Fruit is born. And one of the fruits that's born in us personally. Is that we grow in the knowledge of God. Bearing fruit in every good work.

Growing in the knowledge of God. It's only as we live out what we believe. That actually. We find ourselves. Growing and being strengthened.

[27 : 29] And increased. That faith and hope and love that we have. Increases and develops. As we exercise it. Books are great.

By the way I went to say. That little yellow book. I know several of you read it on prayer. And appreciated it. If you can pass it on. To somebody else. Because I know it's been a blessing. And so if you haven't read that little book on prayer.

Get hold of one. Ask somebody. And make sure you read it. Because that will be an encouragement to you. That's an aside. Advertisement over. Books are good.

They're useful. They're vital. They're helpful. But they can only help in a small way. Our growth in the knowledge of God. It's as we do what we believe.

That we learn more of the goodness. And the character of God. Doing it. It's like everything isn't it? If you want to be a good painter.

[28 : 25] You've got to do it. You don't. You know. You may have a natural gift. But you've got to keep doing it. Haven't you? If you want to be a musician. You've got to keep practicing. And playing. To improve. And so it is dear friends.

With prayer. And with living for Christ. And experiencing God. I want to know more of God. Great. Live for him. Live for him day by day. Live in his presence.

And you will know more of God. I want to have greater faith. Then exercise that faith. Stickiest faith out there. I want to have greater love. Then exercise love.

Care for others. Give to others. And so it goes on. And so Paul's prayer. One of the prayers that he wants. And longs for. Is that the Christians there.

May bear the fruit. Of knowing more of God. There's other fruit as well. But that one for us. As Christians. Is so wonderful. There's one last thing. Isn't there. Here.

[29 : 19] He's prayed. For knowledge. He's prayed. For that knowledge. In order that they might live. It outs. There's something else. That's very necessary. You see. To live the Christian life.

It's not just enough. That we know God's will. It's not even enough. That we seek to do his will. It must be. That we have the power. To accomplish his will. Isn't it.

It's impossible. Isn't it. Maybe you're even sitting there. Thinking. As I'm preaching. This. You see. How on earth. Can I do this Lord. I just. I can't pray in that way. I can't live in that way. I just can't do it.

Well dear friends. None of us can. That's why Paul prays. Being strengthened. With all power. So there's three more answers. That we to pray for. And expect to be answered.

Strength and power. And notice this. It's not just ordinary everyday. Duracell power. It's not just ordinary everyday strength. That. The world's strongest man may.

[30 : 19] Give an example of. No. Look at that. It's strength and power. According to his. That's God's glorious. Might. Isn't that great?

So often. Don't we. In the. In the. In the scriptures. We find that God is called. The Lord God almighty. The Lord of hosts. Is his name. And when we begin. To think about the power.

And the might of God. Here's Paul saying. I want you. To be strengthened. With that. Very same strength. Look at it.

Think about. Think again. This is why again. It's so important. We get in the scriptures. We get in the word. We get in the old testament. As well as the new. Because. We see God's power. Being revealed.

What happened. When the Hebrews. Were brought out of Egypt. 400 years in slavery. Within a matter of. Several days. God delivers them. And brings them out. He passed the Red Sea. He brings them. Through the desert.

[31 : 15] He brings them. Into the promised land. The walls. Of that great. Fortress town. Jericho. Fall at his voice. But this power.

Dear friends. That is ours. That Paul prays for. And prays for. Because he knows. That God desires to give it. Is power. Which is even greater. Than all those things.

Listen to his prayer. For the Ephesians. I pray also. That the eyes of your heart. May be enlightened. In order that you may know. The hope to which he has called you.

The riches of his glorious. Inheritance in the saints. And his. Incomparably. Great power. For us. Who believe. That power.

Is like the working. Of his mighty strength. Which he exerted in Christ. When he raised him. From the dead. That's the power. Wow. Now that is power. Christ.

[32 : 10] Raised from the dead. Here he's saying. I want you to be strengthened. With the same strength. And power. That Christ. Was unable. To break. The chains of death. Let me ask you.

Is that enough power. For you. Is there not enough. For you there. Yes there is. And for me as well. I want you to be strengthened. With power. Why?

Why do we need. Strength and power. Yes we've seen. We need it. To live the life. But dear friends. We need it. Because. So that we might have. He says. Endurance and patience. This power.

Gives us endurance. And patience. Endurance. Is that quality. To keep on going. In spite of the obstacles. That stand in our way. I need it.

And I know you do too. It's that same determination. Of the marathon runner. It's the same tenacity. Of the cross channel swimmer. Endurance.

[33 : 06] To keep on going. But. Again. Hold on. Is it just. That sort of endurance. No. Of course it's not. Just ordinary endurance.

Or tenacity. No. Look at this. That you might have. Great. Endurance. Great. Endurance. Yes. For each of us. There are handicaps.

Great handicaps. To living this life. That is pleasing to God. God. It's hard. To do those things. Which honor Christ. We have temptations. Bombarding us.

Left. Right. And center. From the world around about us. We have the opposition. Of the world itself. And of Satan. Our enemy. But most of all. We have sinful hearts. We have the old flesh.

The old man. We've got to drag around with us. All this time. Yet. Says Paul. I am praying for you. And believing that God will give you. Great. Endurance.

- [34 : 02] In spite of those things. The press. On. Do you want to give up? Of course you do. Why do you think you want to give up?
- Because you're trusting. Speak to myself. Relying on your own strength. Your own endurance. Your own power. To get you through. But. It's not just endurance.
- Notice this. And patience. What's the difference? Well patience is more that peace of mind. And spirit. Not to be overwhelmed.
- By the situation. Not to be stressed. By the circumstances. In which we find ourselves. It's akin to that. That. That. That command. We find in the Old Testament.
- To wait on God. To wait on him. That he might renew our strength. And make us to soar like the eagle. It's that. That patience to say. Lord. I'm not going to scheme.
- [34 : 59] My way through life. I'm not going to plan. And seek to do it. And find my way out of the jam. I'm going to look to you. I'm going to trust you. Because there are times.
- Aren't there? Even though we know. That God gives us strength. Even though we know. That he gives us endurance. There are times. As we've said already. When we. When we begin to think. Well Lord. Where are you? No. This situation.
- Hasn't got any better. I seem to still be struggling. In my prayer life. I still seem to be finding it hard. To read my Bible. I'm still finding it hard. To live for you. And honor you.
- In this situation. Then dear friends. Patience is what you need. To keep on. Trusting. Keep on. Relying. Now in one sense.
- We could say. Well these last two. They give the impression. Very much. Like the old English. Stiff upper lip. You know. You've just got to. Grit your teeth. And you've just got to.
- [35 : 53] Get on with it. You know. It doesn't matter. What happens. You've just got to. You've just got to. Rise above it. You. You've got to have. That. That inner self-belief. That no matter what.
- The slings and arrows of life. I'm not going to give up. That's stubbornness. No. That's not what he's talking about. Notice. That it's not just.
- Simply grinning. And bearing it. That's not the Christian life. And. Joyfully giving thanks. Joyfully giving thanks.
- Paul's prayer. Is that we might know. Rejoicing. In all these things. It isn't. Yes. Life is hard. Dear friends. As a Christian. But it isn't a misery.
- It isn't a. It isn't a. Hardship. To follow Christ. In that sense. It's a joy. Somebody once said. That joy is the oil. On the machinery of life.
- [36 : 46] It keeps. The cogs. Running. Smoothly. Ever tried running your car. Without any oil in it. It doesn't like it. It makes. Grinding noises.
- That's what we sometimes do. Don't we. In the situation. Life. Grinding noise. I don't want to go on. This is too tough. I don't like it. We need to joy. And that's a gift.
- Of the spirit. Isn't it? What's the fruit of the spirit? Love. Joy. Peace and patience. It's joy that comes from thanksgiving. That's where it comes from.
- Stopping. And remembering. And thanking God. For all that he's done for us. So far. Saving us. Rescuing us.
- Making us his children. Bringing us into his family. Sustaining us. Dear friends. Doesn't matter how long you've been a Christian. The only reason you're a Christian still today. Is because of what God has been doing.
- [37 : 44] In your life and mine. He's brought us thus far. Is he not going to take us on further? Yes of course he is. Joy in our salvation. Paul.

David prayed. Take not away the joy of your salvation from me. But sometimes we let loose of it. We forget it. We leave it. We leave it out of our day to day lives.

The joy and thanksgiving. You see any activity that we're engaged in. Whatever it may be. Any activity that we're engaged in.

That we do from duty. Or a sense of legalism. Must produce misery. Doesn't it? If you're working in a job situation. Where it is duty.

And you don't like it. But you do it because it needs to pay the bills. Or whatever it may be. It's always going to be miserable. It's not so much the work that you do. It's the attitude with which you come to the work.

[38 : 40] Isn't it? And dear friends. If we think Christian living. And the sacrifices and the struggles of that. Our duty. And our obedience to God is legalism.

Then we shall never have the joy of the Lord. That comes with thanksgiving. But that's the case for the Christian. The Christian life for the believer. Is a delight to do God's will.

Knowing that he. Knowing that bringing him pleasure. And bringing him glory. Is what pleases us. Because we love him above all others. And as we experience that growing.

And that development. And that fruit in our lives. So that everything. That we're involved with. He touches. We can't help but know something of a joy. That joy that is deeper than just the laughter.

On the face. A joy which yes. Sometimes is a joy. Which even has to face with tears. The circumstances and the losses. But a joy nonetheless. Now can you see why Paul prays as he does?

[39 : 40] Can you see why he prays constantly. In this way. Are you moved to pray like he prayed? Can you pray for one another.

With those sort of prayers. That he prayed. May the Lord help us. To be such men and women of prayer. That we may know.

The answers to these prayers. Being revealed and worked out. In our fellowship. And in each other's lives. Rejoice in the Lord always.

I will say it again. Rejoice. Let your gentleness be evident to all. For the Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything. But in everything by prayer.

And petition with thanksgiving. Present your requests to God. And the peace of God. Which transcends all understanding. Will guard your hearts and your minds.

[40 : 42] In Christ Jesus. Amen.