

Sunday 9AM & 11:15AM Notes 10/20/2019 – Jeff Lyle

“Marked for Eternity” Colossians 1:9-14 | 9 AM

All good parents want to see their children grow, succeed and prosper. The best parents are intentional about ensuring that their children have the opportunity to go farther than they themselves could have ever gone. What is true in natural parenthood is also true with spiritual mothers and fathers: we want the best for our sons & daughters in the faith. When God allows us the joy and privilege of pouring into those coming behind us, we want to be proactive in our investments in their own walks with Christ. Paul’s prayer in Colossians 1:9-14 reveals what he prioritized as a spiritual father in the lives of those coming behind him. He wants these Jesus-followers to be marked forever by the King. From Paul’s prayers over them, we find ourselves stirred in spiritual hunger for these marks to be bolder upon our own lives and appearing on the lives of those in whom we have the opportunity to invest. What does a life marked for eternity look like? Are our own lives displaying these marks? Are we intentionally living in a way that those coming behind us are also marked with the powerful traits of a disciple of Christ? Jesus gave so much so that our lives would be marked for eternity. This message calls us to give ourselves more fully to this desire of the King.

I. Marked for Wisdom (9)

“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...”

Paul, as a spiritual father and the foremost leader in the Church at that time, invested in other believers via the ministry of intercessory prayer. As he wants to communicate how he is praying for the Christians at Colossae, we are able to glean some empowering guidance for our own prayer lives. Paul is praying in these verses for these Christians to prosper in their spiritual journeys. He does not start off in any sense of being vague or general. Paul goes straight to the heart of their need and calls on God to fill these Christians with knowledge, wisdom and understanding. Paul knew how essential it was for them to think rightly as Jesus-followers. He did not wish for them to dabble in knowing God’s will - He wanted them fully immersed in knowing the will of God and living it out.

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Paul knew that they would need to be fully given over to spiritual wisdom as opposed to the wisdom of the age. Spiritual wisdom is rooted in God's ways, God's word and God's works in each generation. If they would pursue these things with all of their heart, then they would be living with an understanding of everything from an eternal perspective. Paul was not playing around. He did not here pray for their comfort, their finances, their health or anything else that rests in the realm of temporary things. Paul wanted his spiritual children to be marked and controlled by a full baptism of their minds. He wanted their lives immersed in the wisdom of God.

II. Marked by Distinction (10)

“...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;”

Here, Paul reveals **WHY** he prayed for them to be filled with the knowledge of God's will with wisdom and understanding. It was not so they could traffic in spiritual nuggets of truth for curiosity's sake. It was not so they could be the most theological person in the room. Paul did not want them to increase in the understanding of God's will so that they would be equipped for doctrinal debate or to impress other believers. No, Paul wanted them to live their daily lives in a way **that brought pleasure to the Lord**. He wanted their relationship with God to go beyond what they believed and fully define how they were living. There is a way that Christians live that is either worthy of the Lord or beneath His worth. **How we live reflects the degree to which we are growing in our love for Jesus**. Paul understood that the lives of all believers are meant to reflect the glory of Jesus Christ. We are to be marked by a distinction that reveals we have been taken from one type of kingdom and placed within another. When we are living in wisdom and understanding concerning the will of God, our lives will necessarily be different from those that do not know Christ. We will bring forth spiritual fruit as God leads us day in and day out. We will commit to good works which, although they cannot save us, bring God glory and reveal Kingdom purpose in and through our lives. Paul also understood that if we live in the awareness of God's will, then we will continue to increase in **our interactive knowledge of Him**. The knowledge of God includes theological understanding, but it does not end there. We are to relationally grow in knowing this glorious God. Jesus did not die simply so we could understand the Book that He has given us. No, His purpose for saving us is far greater. Knowing His will and living

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in spiritual wisdom and understanding actually leads us into deeper relationship with Him. Paul prayed this for the Christians in Colossae.

III. Marked for Victory (11)

“Being strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy;”

In addition to Paul’s prayers for these Christians to be marked for wisdom and distinction, he wanted them to know that they were marked for victory. It was not an easy time and place to be a Christian in Colossae. The culture had many forces fighting against the spiritually organic growth of these people. Paul prayed for them to increase in the power of God. God is willing to strengthen His children with His own immeasurable power. This is a huge statement of truth! God offers us every ounce of power that we need in order for us to live in the knowledge of His will, receive wisdom and understanding, engage in good kingdom works, bear fruit in those works and bring deep pleasure to His heart. The Christian life is not an impossible task. When Christians make the receiving and releasing of God’s power a priority for how they are living, they will experience the three qualities that produce victory: ENDURANCE, PATIENCE & JOY.

There is no victory for those who do not endure. The Christian life is a marathon - actually, it is more like an obstacle course. There will be deep and painful challenges which, in our own human strength, we cannot overcome. Paul prays for believers to receive strength from God and then to learn how to operate in that power as we live. We are to never quit, despair or give in to the component of defeat. We endure through the patience which God gives us. We wait on the Lord. We learn how the various seasons in life come and go. We trust, abide, stand still and continue in faithfulness wherever we are able. Patience is one of the most underrated components of kingdom living. Paul knew how essential it is, so he prayed for Christians to operate in it daily. The result of walking out the victory we have been granted is a life marked by joy. When you know that you have won, even before the victory manifests itself, you will experience deep joy. Jesus did not promise an uncontested life. He promised us a victorious life. You can only experience victory if there is real opposition. Paul prays that all believers will operate in God’s delegated powers which cannot be tapped out. He prays

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that all Christians will persevere, refusing to quit as they exhibit spiritual fortitude and patience with their challenges. He leaves us in the place of joy wherein we know that God has granted us the victory.

IV. Marked by Gratitude (12)

“Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.”

It should be no wonder that those who are filled with the knowledge of God’s will and are experiencing victory should be those who live in the highest degree of thankfulness. Gratitude is the seedbed for so many good things in the Kingdom. Paul mentions the foundation for all Christians’ gratitude: the salvation we have received which has made us citizens in God’s eternal Kingdom. We did not qualify for this on our own. In fact, we were utterly disqualified due to our sin. Because God, in His immeasurable grace, saved us through mercy, we cannot help but to be thankful people. Not only did He deliver us from our sin, guilt and condemnation, He made us to be eternal heirs. We are beloved sons and daughters! We are not tolerated servants! We have been granted a portion in the Kingdom which has no end. Paul prayed for believers to operate in daily gratitude for the gift of eternal life.

V. Marked in Identity (13)

“He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

What exactly did we receive when God saved us from our sin? We know that we are forgiven, but is there more for us to understand? Paul recognized that gratitude will only run as deeply as our awareness of what we have been given by God. If we have a superficial understanding of God’s grace, then we will live in superficial gratitude. So, Paul goes deeper with four points that he unpacks for us. Along with other verses from our New Testament, Paul’s words offer us an opportunity to grow in our humble thankfulness for all that God has accomplished on our behalf.

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“He has delivered us from the domain of darkness...”

1. We begin with a darkened nature (John 3:19) - “And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil.”
2. We do not have to remain in darkness (John 12:46) - “I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in Me may not remain in darkness.”
3. We are provided an exit from darkness (Acts 26:18) - “To open their eyes, 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.”
4. We have a life that reflects deliverance from darkness (Ephesians 5:8) - “For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.”

“...and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son”

1. God’s initiative (1 Thessalonians 2:12) - “We exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into His own Kingdom and glory.”
2. God’s power (Ephesians 2:4-7) - “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ - by grace you have been saved - and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”
3. God’s offer (2 Peter 1:11) - “For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

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“In whom we have redemption...”

1. His provision for your redemption (Ephesians 1:7) - “In Him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.”

2. The pricelessness of your redemption (1 Peter 1:18-19) - “Knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.”

3. The strength of your redemption (Hebrews 9:12) - “He entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of His own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.”

“...the forgiveness of sins.”

1. Nothing in between you and God (Colossians 2:13-14) - “You, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This He set aside, nailing it to the cross.”

2. Jesus has declared you justified (John 5:24) - “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment but has passed from death to life.”

As the text draws to a close, we can see that those who have true faith in Jesus Christ will have lives that are marked for eternity. It is impossible to be in Jesus and not be changed. The will of God is for our lives to continue to be more deeply marked the longer we walk in faith with Him. He will grant us supernatural wisdom and spiritual understand as we seek to be controlled by the knowledge of His will. When doing so, our lives will be fruitful in any good work to which He calls us. We will have the joy of bringing pleasure to His heart as we patiently endure all that opposes us as we walk by faith. As our lives are marked for eternity, they will also be marked with deepening gratitude for the riches of our salvation. Paul was a wise

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spiritual father to pray this for the Christians at Colossae. These prayers are also over our own lives as God has preserved them in the bible for all generations. Let us live proactively in a way that these ancient prayers result in a modern marking of our own lives for eternity.

11:15 AM Notes Below

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"When Clarity Comes"

John 12:12-33 | 11:15 AM

Jesus was never fooled by the crowds. *One day they loved Him, the next day they cried out for His death.* Instead of living for the welcome of the masses, Jesus lived every hour of His life seeking to do the things which brought pleasure to the Father. So clear was Jesus about the Father's assignment for His life that He never once stepped off that pathway. Along the way there were powerful healings, miracles, resurrections, conversions and teachings. The people loved it when Jesus moved in the power of the Father! Yet, Jesus knew that people are fickle, and He was never drawn away after their halfhearted devotion. He often spoke aloud of the wonder of knowing just who would follow Him all the way to the cross. In this message, Jesus leaves us with one of the key principles for living a life that counts for eternity. When the Christian recognizes this principle is his or hers to live out, then spiritual fog evaporates and powerful clarity comes to us. Apart from our receiving this principle as foundational in our lives, we cannot experience the fulness of what is offered to us through the Son of God.

I. We See the Nature of the Crowds (12-18)

A. Eager to find celebration (12-13) - "The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. 13 So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, crying out, Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!"

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Just a short time before, Jesus had released one of His most powerful miracles. When He raised His friend, Lazarus, from the dead, the word began to spread. Lazarus was dead for four days before being miraculously raised to life. It was an undeniable miracle and the fame of this miracle moved quickly. Everyone knew about it. People were seeking out both Jesus and Lazarus because of this amazing miracle. When the Passover week began, people began to celebrate Jesus, hailing Him as their King. Joy and celebration filled Jerusalem as the notion that their Messiah had arrived began to be anchored in many hearts. Who wouldn't celebrate Jesus in his power, strength and glory? With palm branches and shouts of victorious celebration, the crowd began to cheer His presence. Just a few days after this celebration, many in this crowd would be crying out, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" For the moment, however, the crowd was eager to find celebration.

B. Slow to recognize humility (14-16) - "And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, 15 "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your King is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!" 16 His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about Him and had been done to Him."

Jesus was perfect in omniscient awareness of all that was taking place in the moment. He was not fooled by what would prove to be a fickle crowd who temporarily shouted His praises. Earlier in John's gospel we are told, "But Jesus would not entrust Himself to them, for He knew all people." (**John 2:24**) Jesus was not fixated on the praises of man. He was, however, listening to the Father who was leading His Son to fulfil Scripture in that very moment. It was prophesied of the Messiah in **Zechariah 9:9** that he would enter Jerusalem riding humbly upon a donkey. Nobody in the cheering crowd recognized the humble fulfillment of Scripture by Jesus that day. Humility was not the prized commodity of the hour in light of the fact that Jesus had just raised a man who had been dead for four days. Crowds have not changed. Every week, people gather in church houses wanting nothing other than celebration. Humility does not move the crowds. Calm fulfillment of Scripture does not tantalize like signs, wonders and miracles. If the crowd receives a show, they will be energized. If they don't

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receive something dramatic, they often do not have eyes to see that God is actually working powerfully in their midst through calm, biblical means. Jesus did not care what the crowd thought. He was listening to the Father, making sure to do those things which pleased Him alone (**John 8:29**).

C. Zealous toward the sensationalized (17-18) - "The crowd that had been with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. 18 The reason why the crowd went to meet Him was that they heard He had done this sign."

For any who thought my previous notes sounded a little cynical about why the crowds were growing as Jesus came to Jerusalem during Passover, the two verses above remove all doubt. It is hard to blame the people for being excited over a miracle. Who wouldn't at least be curious about a prophet who is raising the dead, healing the sick and casting out demons? Yet, the people were looking for a political Messiah - a governmental king who would put the nation of Israel back on top of the geopolitical world. The citizens wanted Rome to be crushed, and it would take God's Messiah to make that happen. When the news of Lazarus began to spread, the people began to see that this was the King of Israel (**as evidenced by their words in verse 13 above**). Yet, Jesus had something different than a political position in mind. He was coming for redemption of mankind. He was daily fulfilling the Father's will, and that plan was not for Jesus to be enthroned as a political king for the temporary desires of a fickle following. While it is not surprising that the sensational news of Lazarus' resurrection energized the people, it is clearly an empty stirring. Very soon, when Jesus stood before these people as one beaten, accused and rejected, they saw nothing in Him that they would desire Him. Sensationalized momentum is never enough for people to persevere in their following of Jesus. We must see Him as the Father does, embrace Him in the fellowship of sufferings and go all the way with Him to the cross and grave. Jesus is just about to say this exact thing Himself.

II. We See the Nature of Our Calling (19-26)

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A. The extent of Jesus' fame (19-22) - "19 So the Pharisees said to one another, You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him. Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. 21 So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." 22 Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus."

Everyone knew that something had shifted. The Pharisees were recognizing that all their plots, plans and schemes had failed to turn the crowds away from Jesus. So frustrated were these religious leaders that they began to bicker and fight with each other. Then, John writes that there were some Gentiles who had heard of Jesus and His works. They expressed humbly to Philip that they would like to meet Him. The simple statement, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus" weighs heavy on my heart as I read it. People today still long to see Him. Frequently, they see the weaknesses and failures of His people, therefore they never get a real vision of who Jesus is. They see Christian lovelessness, hypocrisy and lukewarmness. They see scandals among Christian leaders. They see tradition instead of truth, self-righteousness instead of self-denial, and dead religion instead of living relationship with Him. People want to see Jesus, but many of them feel that what they see in the Church ruins anything they might learn of the One who is Groom to the Church. We need to live with the awareness that those who wish to see Jesus often look to us in order for that to happen. May we be so soaked with his love, his presence and His power that those whose hearts have been moved to seek Him can find Him in us. Philip went and found Andrew, and then they went together and expressed to Jesus the desire of these Greeks who were curious about Him.

B. The reality Jesus embodied (23-25) - "And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. 25 Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life."

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His enemies were frustrated as the following of Jesus had gained massive momentum. Crowds were swelling. People were hailing Him as Messiah. Now, on top of all of that, the Gentiles were being impacted and intentionally seeking Him out to see for themselves who this Jewish King really was. Amazingly, it is at this peak of His popularity that Jesus discerns that it is time for Him to lay down and die. He declares to Andrew and Philip that this was the moment for Him to give His life. Yes, Jesus could have allowed the people to make Him their King. He could have received the adoration and following of that generation in Israel. Yet, He knew that the Father's plan was not merely for that lone generation. There was the calling from the Father for Jesus to bear **MUCH FRUIT**. If he lived for the welcome of that moment, He would have borne some fruit. Yet, if He chose to submit to the Father's plan and perfect timing, He would need to lay down His life, be buried and then rise again in order to bear fruit in every future generation. Jesus chose not to love His life - His name, His ministry, His following - in the present moment. He sacrificed that life for the **MUCH FRUIT** that would be His through His death, burial and resurrection. Jesus then presents His example as a Kingdom example for all of us. We continually lay down our lives, dying to self and to lesser loyalties, so that it may yield eternal life and the fruit that accompanies eternal life. Not only is Jesus to be the grain of wheat that dies and falls to the ground, so are His followers. We deny ourselves to the extent of comparatively hating our present lives so that our eternal life priorities come to pass. The lesson here is for us to choose to die to immediate, temporary riches so that we can lay ourselves down for the **MUCH FRUIT** which God has ordained for us.

C. The key for Jesus' followers (26) - "If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there will My servant be also. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him."

How is it that we would ever be able to lay down our lives with the full sacrifice that Jesus laid down His own life? **Intimacy is the key.** Where He is, we are to be. If we consider ourselves sons and daughters of God who have committed their lives in service unto the King, we must follow closely. Where Jesus goes, we also go. If He walks in resurrection power, then we walk in resurrection power. If He ministers to the weak and sick and dead, so do we. If He comes

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away from the crowds and the pressures of life to spend uninterrupted time with the Father, we must follow Him and do the same. Intimacy with Jesus is the key to laying down our lives and following Him unto the end. Clearly, Jesus is telling Philip and Andrew (and all of us) that it is not enough to follow him in the thrill of signs, wonders and power. He wants those who love Him enough to follow Him into rejection, shame, betrayal and death. This is what He is teaching in this passage. Those who follow Him in intimacy will serve him in fidelity. These are the ones whom the Father will honor.

III. We See the Nature of Jesus' Commitment (27-33)

A. The weight Jesus carried (27) - "Now is My soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour."

There was no turning back for Jesus. He sensed within His divine self that the hour of His sacrifice had arrived. While there were still a few days before His betrayal and crucifixion, Jesus recognized that the moment had arrived, and His greatest purpose was about to be upon Him. Notice that He declares unashamedly that His soul was troubled. He was resolved to finish the assignment given to Him by the Father. Jesus declares that His sacrificial death was the purpose of His first advent. Yes, He was troubled within...but his emotional struggle bowed to His will. He would carry the weight of the burden all the way unto completion.

B. The desire Jesus embodied (28-30) - "Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." 29 The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him." 30 Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not mine."

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How awesome, precious and beautiful is this brief glimpse into the relationship between the Eternal father and His Divine Son. Jesus declares to the Father that He is aligned in the purpose of glorifying the Father's name. In essence, Jesus says to the Father that the Father's glory is what drives Him further toward the impending hour of death. The Father declares back to the Son that the Son has glorified Him already and that the Son would glorify Him again, a reference to the cross. The people around Jesus heard the sound but they did not discern the depth of what was occurring. Jesus did not feel the need to share with them then exactly what the Father said, however, He did indicate that that the Father was not telling Jesus anything that Jesus did not know. In some manner, what the Father spoke was for the benefit of those there, even though they did not gain full understanding of what was articulated. Perhaps the unspecific sound of the Father's voice was enough to let them know of a supernatural affirmation that Jesus' previous words were true.

C. The mission Jesus came to accomplish (31-33) - "Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. 32 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself." 33 He said this to show by what kind of death He was going to die."

Jesus now points to what was going to proceed from His impending sacrifice. Moments earlier, when Jesus mentioned the need for a grain of wheat to be buried in the earth before it brought forth fruit, He was speaking of His own death. He applied that symbolism to the need for all His followers to deny themselves and die to lesser things but, theologically, Jesus used the grain of wheat statement to represent how His death would bring forth much fruit. Here, He lists some of the fruit that would come forth from his death, burial and resurrection.

He accomplished all this by becoming the grain of wheat who died, was buried in the earth and rose again

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1. **“the judgment of this world”** - to pay the judgment of mankind’s sin

2. **“the ruler of this world will be cast out”** - to destroy the works of the devil

3. **“when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to Myself”**
- to sacrifice as a Lamb

When the clarity comes, we see that following Jesus is not merely about what we receive from what he accomplished. When clarity comes, we see what He did as an invitation for us to fully surrender to Him and to enter into a life of following Him...no matter the cost. The fruitfulness of the Christian life is not discovered in our strength, our temporary prosperity, our names being famous or our circumstances being comfortable. When Kingdom clarity finds us, Jesus is perfectly centered in all that we are seeing, feeling and experiencing. We say yes to Him. We refuse the temporary applause and affirmation of our culture. We refuse to settle for religion. We keep pursuing intimacy with him, becoming the ones who love Him enough to follow Him anywhere. It is no significant thing for a person to follow Jesus in the power of His resurrection because that is so very attractive. The clarity of the authenticity of our love and commitment to Jesus arrives when we are called to follow Him into self-denial and all that accompanies it.

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