

Key:

Purple – Introduction, Conclusion, Main Points, and Sermon Thread

Blue – Explanation/Exposition

Red – Application

Green – Illustration

Brown – Quotation

Yellow – Sermon Notes

The Effectual Fervent Prayer of a Righteous Man

Colossians 1:9–14

Let's take our Bibles together and turn to the book of Colossians. We are continuing our verse-by-verse study of this book in our series, "Preeminence." And today we want to look at Colossians 1:9–14 and "The Effectual Fervent Prayer of a Righteous Man," namely the Apostle Paul praying for the church in Colossae.¹

There's little debate that the greatest preacher in the nineteenth century was the well-known preacher from the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, Charles Spurgeon. Spurgeon was an amazing preacher. The church was constantly packed with parishioners hanging on his every word. And people got saved like crazy at his church. And it would be easy to attribute this success to Spurgeon's brilliance and talent.

But once, when Spurgeon was away, a guest preacher named A.T. Pierson identified something else as the engine driving the ministry of the church. Pierson wrote, "This Metropolitan Tabernacle is a *house of prayer* most emphatically. Here are numerous rooms, under and around the great audience-room, where for almost forty years, this one servant of God has held forth the Word of Life; and in these rooms prayer is almost ceaselessly going up... This is a hive of bees, where there are comparatively few drones. There are prayer-meetings before preaching, and others after preaching... Before I go upon the platform to address these thousands, the officers of this great church meet me and each other for prayer as to the service; and one feels upborne on these strong arms of prayer while preaching. No marvel that Mr. Spurgeon's ministry has been so blessed. He himself attributes it mainly to the prevailing prayers of his people. Why may not the whole Church of God learn something from the Metropolitan Tabernacle of London as to the power of simple gospel preaching backed by believing supplication?"²

I have one overarching goal for today's message. My goal is to fire up our prayer lives as a church for the church. The text in front of us will help us to do that—Colossians 1:9–14.³ In this text of Scripture, the Apostle Paul says, "We're praying for you, church at Colossae."⁴ And then he gives us some specifics on what to pray for.⁵ Let's walk through those.⁶

But first of all, notice Paul's comment on the constancy of prayer.

1) The **constancy** of fervent prayer for a church (1:9a)

¹ I'm deriving this language from the KJV of James 5:16: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." In this sermon I'm identifying the prayers of Paul in Colossians 1:9-14 for the local church of Colossae. But I'm viewing this as a model for all of us in all of our prayer lives for our local churches.

² See the article by Geoff Chang, "Prayer and Simplicity," *The Spurgeon Center*, accessed April 24, 2026, <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/blog-entries/prayer-and-simplicity/>.

³ Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, ZECNT, 68: "While vv. 3–8 provide an example of a thanksgiving prayer, vv. 9–14 provide an intercessory prayer."

⁴ THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA: "Paul's prayer is his way of building on the fundamentals of belief already taught to the Colossians, so that faith will be extended to practice, to right actions." Quoted in Peter Gorday, ed., *Colossians, 1–2 Thessalonians, 1–2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, ACCS, 5.

⁵ Hughes, *Colossians and Philemon*, 23: "Typically when we pray for ourselves or for others, we pray for physical health, well-being, social relationships, and spiritual growth. But part of our intercessory prayers ought to be for 'the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.' Have you prayed like this for others?"

⁶ Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, ZECNT, 78: "While Paul is not intentionally providing us with a systematic teaching on how to pray properly, this prayer report nonetheless becomes a powerful model of prayer."

Paul writes in **verse 9**.

⁹ And so, from the day we heard,⁷ we have not ceased⁸ to pray for you,

Now, just a few questions here. Who's the "we" in this statement in **verse 9**? And what precisely have the "we" heard? What have they heard?

The "we" is Paul, Timothy, Luke, and possible Epaphras, the man who helped plant the church in Colossae. And what they "heard" is **verse 8**: "your love in the Spirit."

And that statement communicates two things: **(1)** The church in Colossae loves one another. In fact, they love all the saints (**1:4**), as we saw last time. **(2)** But secondly, and more precisely, they love "in the Spirit." And that means that they are filled with the Spirit. They are saved followers of Jesus Christ, indwelt by the Holy Spirit. So the church in Epaphras's hometown, Colossae, is full of saved, Spirit-filled, love-filled believers! Paul spent six verses in the previous paragraph thanking God for this church (see **1:3–8**)!⁹

But now, in **verse 9**, thanksgiving gives way to petition, and appreciation gives way to supplication.¹⁰ Paul's been praying for this church.¹¹ He hasn't *ceased* praying for them.

In another place in Scripture, Paul says "pray without ceasing" (**1 Thess 5:17**). And Paul practices what he preaches. He hasn't ceased praying for the Colossians since he heard about their faith in Christ from Epaphras.

Now what does that mean? Let's stop and think about this for a moment. How is that practical? If "always praying" meant "always talking with God" how could you do anything else? How could I ever

⁷ Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC, 69: "'From the day we heard' is perhaps a deliberate echo of the same phrase already used in 1:6: as they were fruitful from the very day they heard the gospel, so Paul and Timothy have been prayerful from the very day they heard of their response to the gospel."

⁸ Paul makes a similar statement about praying for Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:5: "I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day." Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, WBC, 469 says about this, "As a Pharisee, Paul would have followed a regular prayer schedule, and the habit probably carried over to his Christian walk. ἀδιάλειπος, 'unceasing' (a neuter adjective used adverbially; see Rom 9:2 and the adverb ἀδιαλείπτως, 'unceasingly,' in Rom 1:9; 1 Thess 1:3, 1–3; 5:17), does not refer to nonstop prayer; rather it indicates that every time he prays, he remembers Timothy." John Calvin disagrees and writes, "[S]ee how great was his constancy in prayer; and yet he affirms nothing about himself but what Christ recommends to all his followers. We ought, therefore, to be moved and inflamed by such examples to imitate them, so far, at least, that an exercise so necessary may be more frequent among us. If any one understand this to mean the daily and nightly prayers which Paul was wont to offer at stated hours, there will be no impropriety in that view; though I give a more simple interpretation, that there was no time when he was not employed in prayer." Quoted in Lee Gatiss, et al., *1-2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon: New Testament*, RCS, 217–8.

⁹ Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, PNTC, 92: "Paul regularly moves from thanksgiving to petition in these opening sections of his letters. Thus, after giving thanks for the Colossians' reaction to the proclamation of the gospel in their midst (vv. 3–8)."

¹⁰ Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, ZECNT, 64: "The common themes of the first two sections have often been noted: thanksgiving (vv. 3, 12), prayer (vv. 3, 9), hearing (vv. 4, 9), bearing fruit (vv. 6, 10), growing (vv. 6, 10), and 'saints' (vv. 4, 12). But these themes should not mask the progression of thought in vv. 9–14, where unique emphases are placed on a number of points."

¹¹ Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, PNTC, 92: "A noteworthy feature of this prayer are the number of parallels with the thanksgiving section:

"since the day you heard" v. 6		"since the day we heard" v. 9	
"thank" v. 3		"giving ... thanks" v. 12	
"always" v. 3		"not stopped" v. 9	
"when we pray for you" v. 3		"praying for you" ⁴⁶ v. 9	
"understood" v. 6		"knowledge" ⁴⁷ v. 9, v. 10	
"bearing fruit and growing" v. 6		"bearing fruit ... growing" v. 10	

The parallels are numerous enough to suggest that Paul is deliberately echoing the language of the thanksgiving in his petition. The effect is to subtly remind the Colossians again that they must continue on the course they have already begun."

preach? How could I ever have a conversation with my wife or my son? How could I continue talking with God non-stop throughout the day? My voice would grow hoarse. If I prayed silently even without vocalizing, I would never be able to sleep or to write or even sing a song of worship.¹² Obviously it can't mean incessant, continuous prayer without ever doing anything else.

I heard a story once about Charles Spurgeon that he was so brilliant that as he was preaching, he would—in his head—pray for the people he was preaching to by name. And he would do it with one part of his brain, and just keep preaching without missing a step with another part of his brain.¹³

Let me let you in on a secret. Your pastor is not able to do that. He's not that brilliant! Sometimes I'm afraid when I come to this pulpit, that I'm going to trip on something and half of what I've studied all week is going to spill out of my brain! And my tongue will tie up in knots and I won't be able to say what I need to say!

So, what does this mean that Paul says, “we have not *ceased* to pray for you”? Does it mean he hasn't done anything else but pray for them? No, I don't think so. It means, at bare minimum, “**I keep praying for you. I keep coming to God with requests for you. And I'm never going to stop praying for you.**”

And praying without ceasing means for us as a church—don't ever stop praying! Don't ever stop taking your requests to God. Don't ever stop praying for the church. Keep coming back to him. Keep taking your requests to him. Don't ever grow weary of communicating with your God. Be quick to pray. Be eager to pray.¹⁴

I heard it described this way by one commentator. He said the need to pray should feel like a hacking cough.¹⁵ It's that tickle in the back your throat that is constant and unceasing. And he said likewise there should be this tickle in the back of our soul that should always be drawing us to prayer, always longing for communion with God, always desirous of a conversation with the God of the Universe. And the more you pray and the more you grow in your relationship with God, the more you want to communicate with him. It's a growing desire in your heart. **I've experienced that.**

Jesus taught his disciples, “The Parable of the Persistent Widow” to teach them that they ought always to pray and never lose heart (**Luke 18:1–8**). Paul says elsewhere that we should pray “at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication... [keeping] alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints” (**Eph 5:18**). **Romans 12:12** tells us to be “constant in prayer.”¹⁶

Listen, it's not really about *continuousness*, as much as it is about *relentlessness*.¹⁷ It's about a relentless, persistent, commitment to prayer. “**I will never stop praying to the Lord for these things! I choose to be prayerful in all the circumstances of life.**”

“When life is good, I'm going to pray and thank God. When life is hard, I'm going to get down on my knees and cry out to him and plead with him. When life is so-so... six in one hand, half a dozen in the

¹² Craig S. Keener, *IVPBBCNT* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 1 Th 5:17: “Even the strictest pietists of Judaism did not pray all day; but they prayed regularly, much and faithfully. ‘Pray without ceasing’ could mean this type of prayer or to carry the attitude of prayer with oneself throughout the day, not just in corporate worship or personal quiet times.”

¹³ If memory serves me correctly, this came from John Piper's lecture on Spurgeon entitled, “Charles Spurgeon: Preaching through Adversity,” 01-31-95: <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/charles-spurgeon-preaching-through-adversity>

¹⁴ Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2, 189: “‘Pray without ceasing’ does not mean we must always be mumbling prayers. The word means ‘constantly recurring,’ not continuously occurring.”

¹⁵ Ryrie, *First and Second Thessalonians* 79. So also Walvoord and Hitchcock, *1&2 Thessalonians*, 103.

¹⁶ Bruce, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, WBC, 124: “Rom 12:12, τῆ προσευχῆ προσκαταροῦντες (‘persevering in prayer’), which probably conveys the sense of the present passage.”

¹⁷ Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, ZECNT, 68: “It may have the sense of ‘regularly,’ and in reference to prayer may refer to Paul's remembering the Colossians during his regular prayer time.”

other... I still have plenty to pray for. I'm still going to pray and take my requests to God."¹⁸ That's the mentality that we bring to our prayer life. That's our commitment to constancy.

William Temple said once, "When I pray, coincidences happen, and when I don't, they don't."¹⁹ Go figure!

The first statement about prayer is a statement about constancy, or relentlessness, or dedication to fervency in your prayer life. Secondly, notice also Paul specifies the requests of fervent prayer.

2) The **requests** of fervent prayer for a church (1:9b-11)

This answers the question—what exactly should we pray about? If our prayers should be relentless and fervent and constant for our church, then what should we pray about?

Well, Paul gives us a few things here. Write these down as a, b, c, d, and e. The first is...

a) Knowledge of God's **will**²⁰

Look at **verse 9**.

asking that you may be filled²¹ with the knowledge of his will²² in all spiritual wisdom²³ and understanding,

Paul says, "**We haven't stopped praying this for you, Colossians! We haven't stopped asking God that...**

you may be filled with the knowledge of his will²⁴ in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

This statement is akin to what David prays in the OT. **Psalm 40:8** reads, "I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart." Feel the parallelism, church. David's "your will" is parallel to "your law" in that verse. **Psalm 143:10** reads, "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God! Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground."²⁵

"Pastor Tony, I want to ramp up my prayer life for this church. I'm want to be relentless and fervent. What should I pray about?"

¹⁸ Augustine's take on this verse is both idiosyncratic and intriguing: "[I]t is your heart's desire that is your prayer. If your desire continues uninterrupted, your prayer continues also. For it was not without meaning, when the apostle said, 'Pray without ceasing.' Are we to be 'without ceasing' in bending the knee and prostrating the body and lifting up our hands, such that he says, 'without ceasing'? If that is what 'without ceasing' means, then I do not believe it is possible. There is another kind of inward prayer without ceasing, which is the desire of the heart. Quoted in Peter Gorday, ed., *Colossians, 1-2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, ACCS (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 98.

¹⁹ Quoted in Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Worshipful (Psalms 1-89)* (Colorado Springs: Cook Communications Ministries, 2004), 151.

²⁰ Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC, 69: "It is not surprising that the prayer focuses on 'knowledge of his (God's) will.' For a theist who believes that God's active purpose determines the ordering of the world, lies behind events on earth, and shapes their consequences, one of the most desirable objectives must be to know God's will. The corollary, spelled out in the following phrases, is that such knowledge gives insight into and therefore reassurance regarding what happens (often unexpected in human perspective) and helps direct human conduct to accord with that will. Such desire to know and do God's will is naturally very Jewish in character (e.g., Pss. 40:8; 143:10)."

²¹ Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, ZECNT, 68: "The passive verb 'may be filled' (πληρωθῆτε) is a divine passive, where God is the implied subject and is therefore also the reference behind the possessive pronoun 'his.'"

²² Hughes, *Colossians and Philemon*, 23: "God puts no premium on ignorance." MacArthur, *Colossians*, MNTC, 28: "Ignorance is not bliss, nor can anyone please God on the basis of principles they do not know."

²³ Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC, 71: "Whether there is an implied rebuke of an alternatively conceived or false wisdom is less clear since in that case we might have expected more emphasis on the point (as in 1 Corinthians 1-2); but the allusion in 2:23 does indicate that a claim to wisdom was part of the teaching in Colossae that called forth the response of this letter (see also 2:2-3)."

²⁴ Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, ZECNT, 69: "This 'will' is not concerned primarily with God's private plan for individual believers; it is rather his salvific will as he accomplishes his plan of salvation."

²⁵ Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC, 69-70: "A characteristic claim in Jewish tradition was that the necessary knowledge of God's will came through the law: 'Happy are we, Israel, because we know what is pleasing to God' (Bar. 4:4); 'you know his will and approve the things that matter, being instructed from the law' (Rom. 2:18; cf. Wis. 15:2-3; 4 Ezra 8:12). But for Paul in particular there was now a better and surer way of knowing God's will and of discerning what really mattered: by the personal transformation that flowed from inward renewal (Rom. 12:2, probably set in deliberate contrast to Rom. 2:18), so that he can sum up the call to Christian conduct in terms of walking in accordance with the Spirit (Rom. 8:4, 13-14; Gal. 5:16, 18, 25)."

Well, pray this! Pray that we as church will be filled with the knowledge of God's will.²⁶

By the way, God's will derives from God's Word.²⁷ **This was true even in the Psalms of the OT: The law is parallel with God's will (Ps 40:8; see also 119:105; 143:10). So this is, in essence, just a prayer for our knowledge of his Word to increase. Some people sit around all the time begging for God to reveal his will to them, and they leave their Bible untouched and unopened. That's a mistake. You're looking for special revelation, and it's right at your fingertips, but you ignore it. God's will is available to you.**²⁸

And notice how Paul framed this in **verse 9**. There's...

the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

Wisdom and understanding were two of the great virtues espoused by Aristotle.²⁹ Along with prudence, the Greeks upheld wisdom and understanding as supreme pursuits. The Hebrews did too.³⁰ Just look at the book of **Proverbs**.

But this is not just wisdom and understanding in the abstract.³¹ This is *spiritual* wisdom and understanding. This is wisdom and understanding from *God's Spirit*.³²

Paul noted earlier how the Colossians have "love in the Spirit." Now he's praying that they will add to that love, wisdom and understanding "in the Spirit."³³ He wants them to have the knowledge of God's will that includes also spiritual wisdom and understanding.

What that means is that there is spiritual wisdom and understanding that derives from God's Word. And the more you have God's Word in your heart, the better spiritual wisdom and understanding you will have for the day-to-day challenges of life. It's not abstract, ethereal wisdom that doesn't impact your life—like how many angels could dance on the head of a pin... that kind of stuff. That's the Greek concept of wisdom. What Paul is talking about here is practical, God-fearing wisdom.

With that wisdom, you'll know how to be a better husband or wife. You'll know how to be a better parent. You'll know how to be a better, more God-glorifying Christian. You'll know how to make good decisions in your life. You'll know how to give better counsel. You'll know how to glorify God in your daily life.³⁴

²⁶ Hughes, *Colossians and Philemon*, 22: "From the apostle's perspective, a deep, growing knowledge of Christ and his will is of the greatest importance to the spiritual life of all Christians."

²⁷ Hughes, *Colossians and Philemon*, 23: "The Scriptures become the primary source of 'knowledge' for the believer as they are studied in the power of the Holy Spirit. This produces a *Christian mind*, which in fact is what Paul is praying for—a mind, as Harry Blamires says, which is trained to handle life within a framework constructed of Christian presuppositions."

²⁸ Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, PNTC, 93: "What Paul has in mind is not some particular or special direction for one's life (as we often use the phrase 'God's will'), but a deep and abiding understanding of the revelation of Christ and all that he means for the universe (vv. 15–20) and for the Colossians (vv. 21–23)."

²⁹ Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC, 70: "The language and aspiration were widely shared by Greco-Roman philosophy, as classically expressed in Aristotle's numbering σοφία and σύνεσις ('wisdom' and 'understanding') with φρόνησις ('prudence') as the highest virtues."

³⁰ Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, PNTC, 94: "These virtues are essential to the godly leader (e.g., Moses [Exod. 31:3; 35:31]; Solomon [1 Chron. 22:12; 2 Chron. 1:10, 11, 12]; the 'shoot from the stump of Jesse' [Isa. 11:2]) and are given to those who fear the Lord (Prov. 1:7; 2:2, 3, 6; 9:10; 24:3; Job 12:13; 28:20). The combination thus suggests the ability to discern the truth and to make good decisions based on that truth."

³¹ Hughes, *Colossians and Philemon*, 24: "In the Hebrew mind, knowledge and conduct were bound together... The Hebrews saw an absolute connection between knowledge and conduct. From their perspective, a person did not know something unless he or she *did* it. This is from where Paul and indeed all authentic Christianity springs. True spiritual knowledge means action!"

³² Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, PNTC, 97: "References to the Spirit are surprisingly sparse in Colossians (only 1:8; but *pneumatikos* in 1:9 and 3:16 probably also alludes to the Spirit). But Paul's broader teaching certainly justifies our thinking that this divine enablement comes through the indwelling Holy Spirit."

³³ MacArthur, *Colossians*, MNTC, 33: "God's power is manifested in us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Our Lord told the disciples they would receive power after the Holy Spirit came upon them (Acts 1:8). Paul prayed for the Ephesians that they would be "strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man" (Eph. 3:16). To the Romans he wrote, 'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit' (Rom. 15:13). That power is available to the believer who is filled with the knowledge of God's Word."

Pray for that, church! Pray for that every day. Pray for that, for this church, relentlessly and fervently.³⁵ “God, please give us spiritual wisdom and understanding!”

Because here’s what *spiritual* wisdom and understanding do for you.³⁶ Look at **verse 10**.

¹⁰ so as to walk in a manner worthy³⁷ of the Lord,³⁸ fully pleasing³⁹ to him:

Here’s a second thing to pray for as a church. There’s, “knowledge of God’s will.” There’s also...

b) A worthy **walk**⁴⁰

Your walk talks and your talk talks, but your walk talks louder than your talk talks. Paul’s praying here for their walk to talk.⁴¹

By the way, this is a purpose statement in Greek in **verse 10**—“so as.” We pray for the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding—for the purpose of—walking in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him.⁴²

Let me ask you church, “Do you want to please the Lord? Do you desire that? Do you desire to put a smile on God’s face?” I do. I want to please my Lord.⁴³ How do we do that? We do that by “[walking] in a manner worthy of the Lord.”⁴⁴

Now, we need to be careful with this. Because we can make two errors at this place. One error is to say, **“I’m going to please God with my actions. I’m going to please God with prayer life. I’m going to please God with my knowledge of the Bible. I’m going to *earn* his favor with my hard work and my do-gooding and my can-do attitude.”** Careful now. That can very easily slip into works-based righteousness. We have another word for that. We call it *legalism*. Yuck! We don’t want that.

³⁴ Hughes, *Colossians and Philemon*, 25: “Paul saw the dynamic connection between action and knowledge. He knew that as they continued ‘bearing fruit in every good work,’ they would naturally open themselves to ‘growing in the knowledge of God.’ One begets the other in a delectable upward spiral: the more one truly serves him, the more one opens to knowledge of him—the more one knows of him, the more one wants to serve. So it goes onward and upward!”

³⁵ There’s also evidence suggesting that knowing and doing the Father’s will is evidence of transformation. Jesus touches on this (Matt. 6:10; 7:21; Mark 3:35; 14:36; Luke 12:47). This is also implied later in the NT (see Eph. 5:17; 6:6; 1 Thess 4:3; Heb 10:36; 13:21; 1 Pet 3:17; 1 John 2:17).

³⁶ MacArthur, *Colossians*, MNTC, 29–30: “Having the knowledge of God’s Word control our minds is the key to righteous living. What controls your thoughts will control your behavior. Self-control is a result of mind-control, which is dependent on knowledge. Knowledge of God’s Word will lead to all spiritual wisdom and understanding.”

³⁷ MacArthur, *Colossians*, MNTC, 28: “True biblical knowledge is not speculative but issues in obedience.”

³⁸ Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, PNTC, 96: “The immediate context (see esp. 1:3; 2:6), as well as the syntax of this particular construction, suggests that the *Lord* is Jesus Christ—yet another example of the very high Christology that typifies this letter.”

³⁹ The concepts of walking and pleasing God are combined also in 1 Thessalonians 4:1, “Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more.”

⁴⁰ Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC, 71: “The metaphor ‘walk’ denoting conduct in the walk of life is untypical of Greek thought (BAGD s.v. περιπατέω; H. Seesemann, *TDNT* 5.941) but characteristically Jewish (e.g., Exod. 18:20; Deut. 13:4–5; Ps. 86:11; Prov. 28:18; Isa. 33:15; IQS 5:10; CD 19:4; the corresponding Hebrew verb *halak* gives rise to the technical term ‘halakhah’ to denote rabbinic rulings on how the law should be interpreted in daily life).”

⁴¹ MacArthur, *Colossians*, MNTC, 31: “The New Testament describes several features of the worthy walk. We are to walk in humility (Eph. 4:1–3); in purity (Rom. 13:13, KJV); in contentedness (1 Cor. 7:17); by faith (2 Cor. 5:7); in good works (Eph. 2:10); different from the world (Eph. 4:17–32); in love (Eph. 5:2); in light (Eph. 5:8); in wisdom (Eph. 5:15); and in truth (3 John 3–4). Such a walk will please Him in all respects.”

⁴² CHRYSOSTOM: “With faith Paul always couples conduct.” Quoted in Peter Gorday, ed., *Colossians, 1–2 Thessalonians, 1–2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, ACCS, 6.

⁴³ Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, PNTC, 96: “‘Pleasing’ God is not a common Old Testament expression, but is found more often in Judaism and in the New Testament (in Paul; cf. Rom. 8:8; 1 Cor. 7:32; 1 Thess. 2:4; 4:1).”

⁴⁴ Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, ZECNT, 69–70: “This metaphor can rightly be rendered as to ‘live a life’ (TNIV, NIV) or to ‘lead a life’ (NJB, NAB, NRSV), though to ‘walk’ (ESV) evokes OT commandments where the Israelites are ‘to love the Lord your God, to walk [*hālak*] in obedience to him and to hold fast to him’ (Deut 11:22).”

Now here's the other error. And I see this all the time. **"I'm saved by grace. My prayer life is horrible. My walk with Christ is not great. But who cares? I'm saved by grace. More failure, more grace! I don't need to please God with my actions. He's already pleased with me in Christ."** It sounds very pious, doesn't it? The problem with that is that it's unbiblical.⁴⁵ The technical term for that is antinomianism. Probably a better word is license. We feel like we have a license to do anything, and live anyway we want to, because we've got grace as license.

What we've got to do as Christians is turn away from legalism, and turn away from license. And find that sweet spot of a grace-based, "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him." **Pray for that, church. Paul's praying for that for Colossae. We should pray for this for our church. Pray for us as a church and us a Christians to avoid the ditch of legalism on one side and the ditch of license on the other.**

And Paul doubles down on this idea of grace-based righteousness.⁴⁶ Because look at **verse 10**.
bearing fruit in every good work

"Good works! We're not about that as Protestant Christians." Yes, we are! **"Paul doesn't emphasize that in the NT."** Yes, he does. Not as a basis for salvation, but as an outworking of our salvation.⁴⁷

And Paul doubles down on this idea of grace-based righteousness.⁴⁸ Because look at **verse 10**.
*and increasing in the knowledge of God;*⁴⁹

Here's a third thing to pray for as a church.

c) **Fruit-bearing**

Jesus said in **John 15:8**, "By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples."

If you remember from last time, fruit-bearing was a strength for this church in Colossae. Paul said in **Colossians 1:6** that the gospel is bearing fruit "among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth." Fruit-bearing is evidence of legitimate conversion. And the Colossians have that, have that, have that. They are a fruit-bearing church. They are commended for it in this letter.

But Paul says in **verse 10**, **"I'm praying for more. Don't rest on your laurels. I'm praying for more fruit. I'm praying for fruit-bearing in 'every good work.'**⁵⁰ **I'm praying for fruit-bearing in every good thing that you are involved in: your preaching, your evangelism, your study of God's word, your gathering as a church, your families, your raising of children, your endurance through persecution. I'm praying for all of it.**⁵¹ **And I'm praying...**

Look at the end of **verse 10**. **"I'm praying for your...**

*[increase] in the knowledge of God;*⁵²

⁴⁵ See Rom 6:1–2; Ti 2:11–12; Jas 2:17; Jn 14:15, 21; Eph 2:8–10; Heb 12:14; 1 Pet 1:15–16; Heb 10:26–27; 1 Jn 3:6; Heb 12:6; Rom 8:1; Eph 4:30.

⁴⁶ MacArthur, *Colossians*, MNTC, 30: "Believing, submissive Bible study leads to the knowledge of God's will. A mind saturated with such knowledge will also be able to comprehend general principles of godly behavior."

⁴⁷ Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, PNTC, 94: "Spirit-given insight into the will of God, as important as it is, is not an end in itself. Echoing a consistent biblical theme, Paul indicates that the Colossians' mental and attitudinal realignment is to produce behavioral transformation."

⁴⁸ MacArthur, *Colossians*, MNTC, 30: "Believing, submissive Bible study leads to the knowledge of God's will. A mind saturated with such knowledge will also be able to comprehend general principles of godly behavior."

⁴⁹ Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, ZECNT, 71: "The genitive 'of God' (τοῦ θεοῦ) is then an objective genitive. It refers to knowing who God is and what he has done through his Son (cf. vv. 12–14)."

⁵⁰ Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC, 72: "Such is the intensity of some traditional Reformation polemic against the thought of any merit adhering to 'good works' that it might come as a surprise that Paul should ever have spoken in commendatory fashion of 'good works' (cf. Lindemann, *Kolossarbrief* 21; contrast Aletti, *Épître aux Colossiens* 74: 'typically Pauline'). In fact, however, he does so on a number of occasions (Rom. 3:7; 13:3; 2 Cor. 9:8; Gal. 6:10; Phil. 1:6; 2 Thes. 2:17; also Eph. 2:10)."

⁵¹ Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, PNTC, 96: "The Colossians are to continue to do what the gospel is already accomplishing among them."

⁵² Hughes, *Colossians and Philemon*, 24–5: "A profound knowledge should profoundly affect one's walk. It must be understood that any doctrine which isolates the believer from the needs of the world is not a spiritual doctrine. Or put another way, if our doctrine lifts

Here's a fourth thing to pray for as a church. Pray for an increase in our...

d) Knowledge of **God**⁵³

Not just your knowledge of God's will. Paul dealt with that already. Not just your knowledge of God's Word. That's important. But this goes beyond that. Paul says, **"I want you to increase in your knowledge of God. I want you to know God."**

You know, I grew up as Christian kid in a Christian home. I grew up in a good church. I got baptized at a young age. And I was one of just a handful of Christians at my high school in Austin, Texas. Maybe there were more Christians there than that. But I felt oftentimes like I was the only one. And I knew God. And I loved God. And I prayed often to my Lord.

But then I got to college and started to read the Bible more thoroughly. And I started learning things about God that I had never known before. And it was addictive. And I read books like *Knowledge of the Holy* by A.W. Tozer.⁵⁴ And I read other books that were breaking my brain with concepts that I had never considered before. And my knowledge of God grew exponentially.

And then I went to seminary. And I read systematic theology. And I took classes on OT and NT and Church History and biblical theology. And I felt like I didn't know anything before I took those classes. Then I became a pastor. Then I learned how to pray.

And after a few years of pastoring—how many of y'all believe this?—I exhausted everything there was to know about God. No! I didn't. Because God is—even when we get to eternity—inexhaustible. And we'll spend the rest of eternity growing in our knowledge of God.

Do you know why we get distracted in this world by silly things like TV shows, sports, and politics? It's *not* because those things are uninteresting. They are. But our view of God and our understanding of God are too small. And we are a *distractable* people.

How do we fight that distraction? Well, we do like Paul does here. We pray. We pray for increase in the knowledge of God. And that knowledge is linked to fruit-bearing.

Here's a fifth thing to pray for as a church. Pray for ...

e) **Empowerment**

Dangerous word, empowerment. So let's be clear what we're praying for here. Look at **verse 11**.

¹¹ *being strengthened*⁵⁵ with all power,

This statement ("being strengthened with all power") is especially vivid in the Greek because both words come from the same root word, δύναμις (*dynamis*). One is the verbal form ("strengthened") and the other is the noun form ("power").⁵⁶ In a more literal sense, Paul is saying something like, **"being strengthened with all strength" or "being empowered with all power."** I love the ESV, but I wish they would have kept the symmetry of those two words.⁵⁷

I'm going to use the word "empower" to keep the symmetry. Look again at **verse 11**.

¹¹ *being [empowered] with all power, according to his glorious might,*⁵⁸

us so high that our feet cannot reach the ground, it is false."

⁵³ Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC, 72–3: "Another characteristic Jewish theme, 'knowledge of God,' includes experience of God's dealings (e.g., 1 Sam. 3:7; Ps. 9:10; Isa. 43:10; Mic. 6:5) and acknowledgment of God in appropriate action (e.g., Deut. 4:39–40; Prov. 9:10; Dan. 11:32; Hos. 8:1–3). According to Paul, failure thus to know and acknowledge God is at the root of human sin (Rom. 1:21)."

⁵⁴ A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy* (New York: HarperCollins, 1961).

⁵⁵ Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, PNTC, 97: "And the form of the participle (the present tense) suggests that God's provision of strength is continuously available to his people."

⁵⁶ Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, PNTC, 97: "We might paraphrase 'strengthened by God with the greatest strength imaginable.'"

⁵⁷ Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC, 73: "Particularly noticeable in Paul's usage is the claim actually to have experienced this power and to have been its instrument in his mission (Rom. 1:16; 15:19; 1 Cor. 2:4–5; 2 Cor. 4:7; 12:9; 1 Thes. 1:5)."

⁵⁸ Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, ZECNT, 72: "The distinction between 'power' (δύναμις) and 'might' (κράτος) is not clear, but in Greek literature 'power' often points to 'the potentiality to exert force in performing some function' while 'might' points to 'the power to rule or control.' This distinction may also be applicable here, where 'power' points to God's strength in enabling us to accomplish

By the way “being empowered” is what’s called a divine passive. **We’re not empowering ourselves. We’re not hitting the weightroom, so that we can get more power for this.** God has to do this.⁵⁹ He does this by his Holy Spirit. Paul’s praying for this for Colossae. **We should be praying for this power in our church.**⁶¹ *being [empowered] with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience⁶⁰ with joy;*⁶¹

What is Paul praying for here? He’s praying that the Colossians will have cosmic power. He’s praying that they will have power according to “his” glorious might. Who’s the “his”? It’s God—“according to [God’s] glorious might.”

Why? Why do they need this power? They need it for endurance and patience in the midst of suffering (see **2 Thess 1:4; Rom 5:3–5; Heb 10:32–36**). Chances are, the Colossians are getting pummeled and persecuted for their faith in Christ (see **Col 1:24; 2:1; 4:3, 18**). Why wouldn’t they be? We see that in Thessalonica with the Thessalonians (**1 Thess 1:6; 2:14**). We see that in Ephesus with the Ephesians (**Acts 19:23–41; 1 Cor 15:32**). We see that in Galatia. We see that in Corinth (**2 Cor 1:8–10; 11:23–28**). We see that in Jerusalem (**Acts 8:1–3; 12:1–5**). We see that in Rome where Paul is in prison for two years for no good legal reason (**Acts 28:16, 30–31**). Why wouldn’t there be persecution in Colossae?

And if there was, they need power for endurance. They need divine power for this (see **Eph 3:16; 2 Tim 2:1; 1 Pet 4:12–14**). They need power for endurance which has to do with holding up under difficult situations. And they need power for patience which has to do with holding up under difficult people.⁶² **They needed that two-thousand years ago, and we need that now.**

Divine power makes the hardships of life endurable. Divine power also makes it joyful. See that at the end of **verse 11**. Can we go through suffering and pain with joy? Is that possible? Not glib happiness or glee. **I’m not saying you plaster a smile on your face, even though you’re hurting.** But joy.⁶³ Can we do that? According to the NT, we can.

In fact, Paul was in prison in Rome when he wrote **Colossians**. One of the other books he wrote during that two-year period was **Philippians**. And Philippians is the book about joy. **Philippians** is the counterintuitive book about suffering with rejoicing as Paul was practicing what he was preaching in prison, in chains, and yet rejoicing. And he says, **“Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice.”**

You might say, “I haven’t gotten to that place yet, Pastor Tony. I haven’t learned yet how to do that. When I go through hardships in this life I get mopey and frustrated and angry, not joyful.” Yeah, I struggle with that too. And that’s why we need to pray.

So pray for that, Messiah Bible Church. Pray for the empowerment to endure patiently (circumstances and people) with joy.

Listen, can I say something here. When you’re sick, or when you are hurting, don’t just pray for healing. Don’t just pray for relief. Pray at the same time, “God, give me empowerment to endure this with joy.”⁶⁴ Paul’s praying that for the church in Colossae. We should pray that too.

his will, while ‘might’ points to his authority established through his mighty acts in history.”

⁵⁹ Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, PNCT, 97: “Living a life worthy of the Lord is a high and difficult calling. In typical New Testament fashion, Paul reminds us that God gives what he demands.”

⁶⁰ Hughes, *Colossians and Philemon*, 26: “‘Endurance’ is in reference to adverse circumstances, whereas ‘patience’ is in reference to difficult people.”

⁶¹ MacArthur, *Colossians*, MNTC, 34: “Paul does not have in mind a stoic, teeth-gritting endurance. The strength provided by knowledge of God’s Word allows the believer to endure trials joyously, literally ‘with joy.’”

⁶² Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, ZECNT, 73: “A clear distinction can be found in 2 Cor 6:4–6, where ‘endurance,’ grouped with ‘troubles,’ ‘hardships,’ and ‘distresses’ (6:4), points to the ability to stand in the midst of persecutions and difficulties. ‘Patience,’ however, grouped with ‘purity,’ ‘understanding,’ and ‘kindness’ (6:6), points to a general state of calmness and control.”

⁶³ Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC, 77: “Both at Qumran and in the early Christian gatherings the joy of shared worship was understood as a foretaste of heaven.”

⁶⁴ Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC, 75n22: “‘A Stoic in the stocks would have borne the discomfort calmly and uncomplainingly, but would he at the same time have been heard ‘singing hymns to God,’ as Paul and Silas did in the Philippian town jail (Acts 16:25)?” (Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians* 48).”

Write this down as a third point in your notes. Paul gives us here as well...

3) The **mentality** of fervent prayer for a church (1:12)

Look at **verse 12** with me.

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

Now let me be clear about what Paul is doing here. In the previous section, Paul gives thanks to God for the Colossian church. And you might think he's reverting back to that now.

But he's not. This is a continuation of **verse 9**—"We have not ceased to pray for you..." So what Paul is doing here is he's praying for the Colossians to continue giving thanks to the Father. He's praying... technically it's the "we" of him, Luke, Timothy, and whoever else... They are praying for the Colossians to stay thankful. That's how important a thankful heart is.⁶⁵ That's the mentality of fervent prayer for a church.⁶⁶

Look there's a time for petition. There's a time for lament. There's a time for, **"God, where are you? This pain is so bad, I feel like I'm going to break in half."** We see that in the **Psalms**.

But if that's all you ever pray... if that's all you ever express before the Lord, then your prayer-life is exhibiting a falsehood. Because no matter how bad it gets in this world you always have... if you know Christ Jesus as your Savior... and that's a big if... but if you know him... no matter how hard this life gets... you always, always, always... have hope. You always have... how does Paul put it here? Look at **verse 12**...

[a] share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

Look at the end of **verse 12**. Look how Paul puts this together. **"We pray that you are..."**

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

How can we be grateful and even joyful going through a painful breakup? How is it emotionally and spiritually possible to be grateful and even joyful when we go through an unwanted divorce? How is it possible to be both grateful and joyful when cancer is eating away at our bodies, and the doctor says, "There's nothing left for us to do." How is that possible?

I'll just tell you, it's not possible! It's not possible without Christ! It is not! But if you have Christ, if you are a saint, if you are filled with the Spirit, if you have saving faith in Jesus and an inheritance to come after death, what's the worst that can happen? What's the worst thing? Death? You just go home to Christ in glory.

What's the worst that can happen? Suffering? That's worse than death, really! But you're just gaining treasures in heaven. Everything that Satan and this world can throw at you, you can defeat with thanksgiving and joy because you have been *qualified* by God the Father to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

You might ask, **"When did I get qualified for that? How did that happen? Who did that?"**

I'm so glad you asked. Because I can't wait to get to **verse 13 and 14**. I can't wait to get to **verse 15** either, but I have to wait till next week for that!

How'd we get qualified for our "share in the inheritance of the saints in light"? Look at **verse 13**.

⁶⁵ Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, PNTC, 100: "For the giving of thanks implies that what has been received has not been earned but is a gift. Thanksgiving is therefore the flip side of a key Pauline theological claim: that Christians are saved by and live in grace. The reminder of this fundamental gospel truth would be especially important in a context where false teachers were insisting on a program of rules for true spiritual fulfillment (cf. 2:16-23)."

⁶⁶ MacArthur, *Colossians*, MNTC, 35: "Giving thanks is too often demoted to a secondary place in the prayers of Christ's people. Our attitude in approaching God is often reminiscent of the leech's daughters: "Give, Give" (Prov. 30:15)."

¹³ He [that's God the Father] has delivered us from the domain of darkness⁶⁷ and transferred⁶⁸ us to the kingdom⁶⁹ of his beloved Son,⁷⁰ ¹⁴ in whom [i.e., in the Son, in Christ]⁷¹ we have redemption,⁷² the forgiveness⁷³ of sins.

Write this down. Last point. I'll just call this...

4) The **basis** of fervent prayer for a church (1:13–14)

Why are we joyfully thankful in the midst of suffering? Why are we praying for that? Why are we even able to pray for that to a God who listens and responds? The answer, very simply, is Jesus.

It's because of Jesus that we have been transferred from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of his beloved Son... what a phrase!⁷⁴ What an amazing use of language. If you don't have Christ, life is dark. There's no joy in the midst of suffering. All you can do, really, is just postpone the inevitable. What a sad state of affairs, being stuck in the domain of darkness.

But if you have Jesus, you have been transferred... **Here's my transfer papers! "I don't belong over here anymore. Domain of darkness... Sayonara. I'm in the kingdom of his beloved Son. I've got redemption in Christ. I've got forgiveness for my sins."**

Listen, I've got that. I've got that! Do you? If you don't, then the only prayer you need to pray today after this message on prayer is a prayer of repentance and faith. Confess your sins. Express your belief in Christ. And join the kingdom of light. Join the kingdom of his beloved Son.

For those of you who know Christ, love Christ, and follow Christ, here's the challenge for you—We need to pray. We need to do as Paul does here.

The Bible says that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man [or woman] availeth much" (James 5:16, KJV). We have an example here of a righteous man praying for a church. Let's do like him. Let's pray for this church. Let's pray fervently and relentlessly for knowledge of God's will, a worthy walk, fruit-bearing, knowledge of God, and empowerment. Let's pray with a mentality of thankfulness. And let's pray on the basis of what Christ has done for us on the cross, providing forgiveness of our sins.

⁶⁷ Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, PNTC, 104: "People who have not been rescued by God in Christ live in a power structure that is characterized by the forces of chaos, evil, and judgment."

⁶⁸ Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC, 77: "There is nothing quite like this claim that believers in Christ Jesus have already (aorist tense) been transferred into the kingdom, like a whole people transported from their traditional territory to settle in a new region."

⁶⁹ Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, PNTC, 106: "When taken in conjunction with explicit mention of the kingdom in this context, it seems clear that Paul is drawing our attention to Jesus' messianic and kingly status."

⁷⁰ Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, PNTC, 105: "Jesus habitually spoke of the 'kingdom of God' (or 'of heaven' as a periphrasis for God). Another indication of Paul's high Christology, then, is his reference to this kingdom as *the kingdom of the Son he loves* (see also 1 Cor. 15:24; 2 Tim. 4:1). *Son he loves* translates a Greek genitive construction that would be literally rendered 'the Son of the love of his.' The TNIV, with most commentaries, takes *agapēs* ('of love') as a descriptive genitive and *autou* as possessive: 'the Son characterized by the love that belongs to God.' The closest parallel to this language in Scripture comes in God's commendation of Christ at his baptism: 'This is my beloved Son' (ESV; *ho huios mou ho agapētos*)—language that alludes to the presentation of the (messianic) king in Psalm 2:2. Paul may also be alluding to another key Old Testament messianic prophecy, 2 Samuel 7:12–16."

⁷¹ Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC, 82: "The one step clearly taken beyond Jewish thinking on forgiveness is the location of forgiveness no longer in the cult, or even simply in directness of prayer to God, but once again 'in Christ.' As particularly in Galatians, it is the possibility of Gentiles being 'in Christ' that brings them within the sphere of God's gracious forgiveness. 'In Christ' is the key to all."

⁷² Hughes, *Colossians and Philemon*, 28: "We have been purchased from the slave market, and our sins have been sent away."

⁷³ Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC, 81: "This latter point perhaps needs some emphasis since it has sometimes been suggested that Jesus brought forgiveness to a legalistic Judaism to which the theology and experience of forgiveness had become foreign (see, e.g., details in my *Partings* 44–51). But forgiveness was at the heart of the sacrificial cult centered in Jerusalem (note, e.g., the repeated refrain in Lev. 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:6, 10, 13, 16, 18; see further J. S. Kselman, *ABD* 2.831–33). And forgiveness continued to be a regular theme in the Judaism of Paul's time. Equally it was a familiar theme in early Christianity (e.g., Mark 1:4; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38; 10:43; Heb. 9:22; 10:18; Jas. 5:15; 1 John 1:9; *Barnabas* 6:11; 16:8; *Hermas*, *Mandates* 4.3.1)."

⁷⁴ Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, ZECNT, 76: "In contemporary Greek literature, the verb 'transferred' (μετέστησεν) could refer to the action of a king who transplanted a people group in another country or region."

I'll close with this. Years ago, the great woman of faith, **Corrie ten Boom**, asked this question about prayer. She asked, **"Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?"**⁷⁵ In other words, is prayer your constant resolve in your spiritual life? **Or is it, "If necessary, break glass"?**

Prayer was never meant to be a last resort, people. It was meant to be a reflex. And I'm not here to make you feel guilty about your prayer life. That's pretty easy to do. And guilt is a short-term motivator.

What I'm trying to do is—I told you this at the beginning—fire up our prayer lives as a church for the church. And if I could go a step further than that, I'm trying to engender a prayer-focused culture in our local church—Messiah Bible Church. Some of you are all over that! You are already on that program. And some of the rest of us need to catch up. We need to put into practice what we see Paul doing here. We need to pray.

We've got an example here in **Colossians 1**. There are other examples all throughout the Bible.⁷⁶ **Let's get after this, church.**⁷⁷ **Let's be a church that prays.**

⁷⁵ Corrie ten Boom, *Clippings from My Notebook* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), 64.

⁷⁶ For help with this, see the passages on prayer at <https://www.openbible.info/topics/prayer>

⁷⁷ Hughes, *Colossians and Philemon*, 28: "Why not covenant to pray for both the *knowledge* and *conduct* of your fellow-believers. A church which is growing in the knowledge of Christ and his will, and is walking worthy of him, will do great things. Let us commit ourselves to sensitive, fervent intercession for our brothers and sisters."