

Colossians 1

Louis T. Talbot

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And thank you Mr. Announcer and good morning my radio friends and friends of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles. This is Louis T Talbot welcoming you to another study in the Epistle of Paul to the Colossians and I welcome you in the matchless name of our wonderful Lord. And in behalf of the students who are to be the missionaries of tomorrow. These students of course are the students of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles.

I want you please to turn your Bibles to Colossians chapter one. I trust that you have your Bibles because you know get the more out of your study when you are looking at the text. Now yesterday we've gone down to verse eleven of this chapter. How the Apostle Paul told these Colossians that he was praying for them and then he mentioned that he was asking the Lord to do six things for these saints at Colossae. And I think that, that what the Lord laid upon his heart in regard to these Colossians are the things that the Spirit of God wants us to realize in our day. I want you to look at verse nine, just begin at nine of that chapter one. The apostle Paul says, "For this cause we also, since the day that we heard it," that is the thing that Paul had heard was about their faith and about their love. And he says, "since that we ever heard about you, do not cease to pray for you and the desire that yee might be filled with a knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding and that yee might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing. Being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. Strengthened with all faith according to His glorious power. Unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness."

Now we have seen that there are six things that the Apostle Paul there mentions to the Lord concerning these Colossians that, that these things may be known to them spiritually and experimentally. I don't know, we had two of them yesterday. I do not know whether we'll be able to get through the other four today day or not. But yesterday we were considering the first two. First he prays that they might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. Do you see the apostle Paul is putting before these Colossians that God had a plan for their lives? And God has a plan for your life my dear friend. He has a plan for my life, it may not be anything spectacular but whatever it is, the that the Apostle wanted that it should be realized in every life. And then secondly in verse 10, he prays that they might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing. Their walk, of course, refers to their whole manner of life. And he prays that in all of their actions and relationships with people, both saved and unsaved, that they might be well pleasing unto the Lord. You know that if you walk according as God wants you to walk, you know you may not be well pleasing the people but, but the main thing, my dear friends, is to be well pleasing to the Lord.

I don't think that a man who fails to pay his debts, pay his, his, his obligations can have very much of a testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you see that, in all of our dealings with people, with unconverted people if your walk is going to be a right with God, then you want to be upright in all of your dealings? And that applies not only to preachers but also to laymen as well. In all or their business transactions and all of our conversation. That (inaudible) all that is included in our walk. And you know that that word pleasing means to be subject to another's will. That, in everything that you do, that you may not be doing it the way you want but the way that the Lord wants it done. And that my dear friends, covers the whole life.

I want to say something in regard to our believers walk that I think will, will correct an erroneous idea. You know that sometimes I have heard it expressed in Bible conferences and in some Bible teaching that people have said that, "That the more you are like Christ and the more people see the Lord Jesus Christ in your life, the more that they will want to know Him as their savior." Now my dear friends that may sound alright, but you know that it is not always true because people who do not love the Lord Jesus Christ, you know, it's evident that they're not going to love you. And the more that you love the Lord Jesus Christ the more possibly they will be displeased with you. It is more likely that the more you grow like the Lord Jesus Christ, the more people will think that, that you're just off your base and they'll think you're strange and they are and they'll shun ya.

Do you remember what the Lord Jesus Christ said in the 15th chapter of John and verse 18? He said "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you." And I tell you my dear friends that this world hasn't changed very much during the last 1900 years. It hasn't changed since the Lord Jesus Christ was, walked this earth.

You know one of the greatest men that ever lived in the Christian era is Samuel Rutherford. He has been with the Lord now, I guess, for a couple of hundred years. But he was born in Aberdeen Scotland and he is considered one of the most wonderful of all the Scots saints. When I was in Aberdeen some couple of years ago, I was thinking of this man Samuel Rutherford. And you know that Charles Adam Spurgeon, and the prince of preachers, has said that Samuel Rutherford's letters, that probably, that they are the nearest to inspiration of anything that he has ever read.

And yet, do you know what happened to Samuel Rutherford my dear friend? He was hated and he was thrown into prison and he's spent a couple of years in prison. And yet many of his famous sayings such as, were, such as, "The sands of time are sinking." Have just been woven in some of the most beautiful hymns that we have in our book on hymnology.

"The sands of time are sinking; the dawn of the heaven breaks." Do you know that he's, he's scribbled those words upon the wall of his cell? He scribbled those wor- words, "The sands of time are sinking; the dawn of the heaven breaks." And you know that finally, he was given the liberty of the city. But, but he was forbidden to preach and people pointed to him on the street as they walked, as he walked along. Well you know that that is not very nice, my dear friends, but that may be the result in your community if you walk before the Lord, unto all pleasing. And so don't think, my dear friends, that because folks do not take to you naturally in your Christian life that you are not walking before God. It may be that the more you walk before the Lord, unto all pleasing, the more enemies you get. Well let that be as it may, but the thing to do is to, to walk before Lord, unto all pleasing.

Now the next thing that he says concerning these Corinthians is, these uh, Colossians is in verse ten. "Fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of the Lord." Now there are two there, two of these six requests that are packed into that tenth verse. "Fruitful in every good work." You know that there are some folks, my dear friends, that are fruitful in one work and in two works possibly, but, but they're bearing unfruitfully in the love of other works. The fact that a man is a great preacher, the fact that a man is a great teacher, the fact that a man is a great outstanding Christian layman. Is no evidence that he is bearing fruit in every good work.

And so the third thing that the Apostle Paul emphasizes here is fruitfulness. He wanted these Colossians to be fruitful in every good work. And if you're going to emphasize any word, my dear friend, you better put just a pencil mark around that word every. "And we are to be fruitful in every good work according to the will of God." You know it's a wonderful thing, my dear friends, to be fruitful and to be fruitful in every good work.

You know and some little time ago, I was taking a lunch with a, with a member of the Church of the Open Door. He has an orchard out here somewhere. And he is that aim is to tell is to tell you that I want to show you are a very, very interesting tree. And I went out to look at it and lo and behold, there was growing on that tree about six different kinds of fruit. Of course they are all varieties of the same fruit. There was the orange and there was the tangerine and there was the grape fruit and there was the lemon and I think that there were a couple of others. And I couldn't believe my eyes, to see these different kinds of fruit growing on the one tree of course they had all been grafted in.

And I said to the man who was my host, I said, "You know that this is exactly as God wants us to be." He wants us to be like this fruit tree and he wants us to be fruitful and he wants us to bear fruit in abundance in every good work.

You know my dear friends that that an orchard man, a man who is a fruit grower. He prizes, he prizes a fruit tree because of its fruit and not because of its branches and not because of the contour of the branches and not because of its leaves. He prizes a tree for its fruit. And the fruit and the tree heavily laden with fruit will hang its branches. And do you know my dear friends

that the more fruit a branch has, the closer it gets to the ground. Have you ever noticed that? Have you ever noticed my dear friends, as you have driven along the road side that that you have seen fruit trees and there are a lot of stakes. There are a lot of pieces of board that are put right under some of the branches and they're connected with the ground. Well you know the reason for that? You know that the branches are, are so filled fruit that they just hang down and they are as close to the ground as possible and they would just break off if some support weren't given.

And I want to say to you my dear friends that perhaps the sign of a fruitful Christian is humility. When a boat rides high in the water there is nothing in it, but when it is heavily laden with freight then it rides low in the water and all you can see is the upper part. Have you ever seen a boat like that my friend? Have you ever seen a boat that rides the way high above the water line? Well you know that the higher it is and the more you can see the boat, my dear friends, the less there is in it. But when the cargo is put in, the more cargo there is, the lower into the water it sinks. And so it is with a Christian as he bears fruit for God. You know that he becomes lowly and he becomes humble and he realizes that, that it had, that whatever he is, he is by the grace of God. And the Apostle Paul prayed that they might be fruitful unto the Lord for His glory.

You know that there is a very blessed verse in the book of Jeremiah that I think you ought to turn to or rather you can turn to it when this broadcast is over. It is Jer- Jeremiah chapter 17 and verses seven and eight. Just put that down will you? Jeremiah, chapter 17 and verses seven and eight.

Now here is a very remarkable statement and it is in connection with this matter of fruit bearing. And the prophet says this, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord and whose hope the Lord

is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters and that spreadeth out her roots by the river and shall not see when the heat cometh but her leaf shall be green and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."

You know my dear friends isn't that a remarkable thing? Here is Jeremiah talking about a tree and because it is planted by the river, it does not matter whether it is spring or summer or autumn or winter. It does not matter whether it is drought or whether there is the, whether excessive heat comes upon it. It just goes on bearing fruit. And my dear friends, that when a man has his life in a very practical way, linked with God, it doesn't make any difference to this Christian just how the weather goes. Whether the weather is warm or hot or dry, just simply because his roots by the river.

You'll see that the weather and the seasons make no difference. You know that there are some people who are good Christians when everything is going nicely and there is a lot of fine teaching going around and some good Bible teaching nearby and when finances are way up. But when there comes the season of drought, when there are not so many outstanding Bible teachers or when things go wrong in their business and so on. Well they somehow or other, all their songs seems to go and they go down with a drought. You know the better some folks my dear friends that are just like that.

But you know that there are some folks who have their roots by the river. And the weather doesn't matter and the Bible teachers do not matter. It does not matter what opportunities they have. And it does not matter so much whether they have much of this world or whether, world's goods, or whether they have little. They are just getting nourishment from the ever flowing river.

Maybe the river is the word of God, maybe the that is what Jeremiah has in mind. Its just a picture of a flowing river and a tree that is planted by its side and then the drought and the heat comes but it makes no difference to that tree. My dear friends, the Lord Jesus is the river of water of life and when we are living by Him and when we are living by spiritual means, you know that circumstances do not make very much difference.

And you know that I have mentioned to you from time to time, you know Mrs. Martha Snell Nicholson, I used to go down and see her before she recently went to be with the Lord. I don't know how many of you folks knew her personally. But you heard me talk about her for quite a time. And her books, well by the way her books can be secured in the Biola book room. Her poems are among the most beautiful of all poems that I have ever read. And sometimes I'd go down to see her and sit by her bedside and ask how she slept last night and she would say, "Well how I didn't sleep so well, the pain seems to be increasing." She had been on that bed for about twenty years and my dear friends if any person knew what drought was, if any person knew what heat was, if any person knew what adversity was from a physical standpoint, it was Martha Snell Nicholson. And yet you know that she was, she was bearing fruit for the Lord. That is yet that radiance of, of Christian living. That warmed your own soul as she ministered to you. Many a time I had gone into minister to her and I came out finding that she had ministered to me. And I found that I had, as I went my, her, made my way from her home to the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, then I was greatly blessed and strengthen and fortified because of the little time that I spent with her.

And you know that I found, in my conversation, just picking some of the fruit that was, that was growing on her life and the strength that she had and the spiritual fortitude that was her

possession, you know the she imparted to me. My dear friends, it's a wonderful thing to live like that. It's a wonderful thing to be so planted by the water of life and to be in such communion with the Lord Jesus Christ that no matter what may come, no matter what may be the, the circumstances, that somehow or other you just find yourself fortified with the divine help. So that in, in the time of heat, in the time of drought, in the time of leanness, that you bear fruit and under Him.

Now that's what the apostle Paul is saying to these Colossians. And then he says in verse ten, we don't have time to go into this, he says "Increasing in the knowledge of God." You know that he does not see increasing in knowledge about God. You know that you can learn a great deal about God, but not know the, the Lord Himself. And the Apostle Paul prays that they might increase in the knowledge of God. And I want to close with this my friend, that the more you know the Lord Jesus Christ, the more you know God. The man who does not know Christ, he does not know God at all. The man know knows little about Christ, he just knows that little about God. The more who, the man who knows a great deal about Christ is the man who knows a great deal about God. And so to increase in the knowledge of God is to increase in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus who came into the world to reveal Him. My time was up and thank you for listening and goodbye and God bless you all.

[Musical interlude]

- Announcer

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