

Be Filled For This

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[0 : 00] Okay, if you got Bibles, open to Colossians 1.

! These disciples of Jesus in this place called Colossae.

And what Paul was trying to get across in kind of the big thrust of his letter is that, man, what we need is Jesus.

We don't need anything else. We need Jesus. And there was starting to be some teachings trickling in that Jesus was a great start, but you need to finish with something else. You need a little bit more to experience the life of heaven or to get to heaven, to please God.

And Paul says, no, no, no. And time and time again, we're going to read that like, actually, no, there's nothing else. Jesus is the means. He's the way, the truth, the life, the substance, the everything. And so Paul is writing this.

[1 : 14] He's passing it along. It's his best wisdom. And, you know, if you and I, if we have a limited amount of time to pass on our best wisdom to the ones we care about the most, what are the things that we would say, right?

Like, those words would be so precious. We wouldn't go into debates about who's the greatest Marvel character or something, right? Those things that are kind of frivolous in life fall to the wayside.

And we get to the core. We get to the substance. We get to the meat and the marrow of what life is really about and what is most important. Those are the things we want to pass on. And when we read a letter like we do here, like we have in Colossians, we are getting Paul's best wisdom for what it means to know and follow Jesus.

Because in those days, like, writing a letter isn't like what you do today. You don't pull out, like, a piece of paper that costs you a cent and a pencil that costs you 10 cents and write something to somebody. Stick a \$1 stamp on there and send it off.

You had to write it on parchment. And parchment was expensive. Like, you can't imagine how expensive it was. And if you had a small budget, like church folks often do, like was Paul's reality, you didn't waste your words.

[2 : 28] You didn't mince them. You brought out your best stuff. And our passage today is Paul sharing his most important prayers for the Colossian church.

And I'm sure there are many other things that he prayed for them when he thought of them. But we can be sure that what we have here, what we're going to read today, is for Paul that which matters most.

And probably that which he prayed most often for them. And so, verse 9, it says this. 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, Jesus' will, in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

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. Being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might for all endurance and patience with joy.

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

[3 : 39] This is God's word. For Paul, in his ministry, in his life in following Jesus, and the calling that he had in following him, prayer was as much a part of that as was preaching and teaching of the gospel and being sent to various places to bring those things.

He tells the disciples at Colossae that as soon as he heard about their faith, as soon as he heard that they had become these believers that were meeting together and had formed this community,

that they had never stopped praying for them.

He said, this is what we do. Paul shows us that prayer is a lifestyle. He shows us this lifestyle of prayer, right? And we just finished. We've kicked off 2026 looking at prayer.

We did an eight-week series on prayer, and it's easy to have those moments and then kind of like, hey, that was nice. Let's move on to some other things. May 6th, we're pushing pause on our regular community group format, and we're gathering here together for a pizza and our prayer night. You might ask, Jesse, what does pizza have to do with prayer? Well, come and find out, okay? Paul here, he gives us this example for a praying life. We pray for what we love.

[4 : 50] We pray for what only God can do. We pray for what is yet to happen, what we see. Lord, we need you to come through in this way. And so Jesus' disciples can and should run to prayer first and often because prayer work is a preeminent ministry everyone can and should do.

And that word preeminent just means it's first and foremost. It's supreme. It should be the front end of everything and walking. Any great endeavor we're going to do for Jesus, man, we've got to pray it. We've got to pray it up.

We've got to pray into it before we just run into it. In whatever way you serve, in whatever way you're living life for God's glory, whether that is on a hospitality team here on Sunday or holding babies in the nursery across the street or when you go to community group or when you enter into school and the schoolwork you're doing, your job, your vocation that you enter into during the week or whether you're a parent or not or marriage, whatever that may be, all of this is a calling to give God glory.

And if that is true, then we should be praying it up. We should be praying into it. Pray it first. Pray it all the way through. Pray for each other. Pray for each other when we're together.

Pray for each other when we're not together. Pray for people individually as God puts them on your heart. Or maybe you just have a list of folks that you're like, you know, on Mondays I pray for these folks, on Tuesdays for these folks, and so on and so forth.

[6 : 14] Pray for them individually and then pray for the church as a whole, as a body. That's what Paul is doing here. He doesn't name anybody by name, but he's saying to the Colossian believers, you as a community, you as this entity, this identity in Christ, in your togetherness, I'm praying for you and all of you.

Pick a person to pray for, this church to pray for. And what you will do as you do that, you're going to do ministry in the Spirit. That's what Paul, it's a thing. Paul says actually this very thing in Colossians 2 verse 5.

For though I am absent in the body, I can't be with you in person, and I haven't been with you in person, yet I am with you in spirit. And that isn't like hippie-dippie granola Christianity, right? That's Bible truth on how God's kingdom works. Paul isn't, he hasn't been there to minister to them in person, but still he's been ministering to them nonetheless.

So what ministry gift can you give to the people of City Grace Church? What ministry gift can you give to your friends and family and neighbors and co-workers?

[7 : 17] What ministry gift can you give to the church across the globe? Your prayers. Paul, brilliant mind.

I mean, people have studied him and they reckon he was one of the smartest dudes. Both in knowledge and in rhetoric. He was an effective teacher.

He was a pioneer missionary. Also, he was a man fully devoted to prayer. And so we too, he gives us an example, just like Jesus did, to be devoted to praying for God's people.

And so that begs the question, okay, if we're going to do that, if we're going to pray first, we're going to pray it all the way through, what should we be praying for? Well, verse 8, he says this, I'm asking that you, believers in Colossae, I'm asking that you, believers in New Bern, may be filled with the knowledge of Jesus' will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Other translations, like the NIV, they say that may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom, understanding in the Spirit, in the Holy Spirit.

[8 : 28] So what is this thing that we should be praying for each other? Ask. We should be asking for each other on our behalf for an increased discernment of Jesus' character and will, to know him and to know his purposes for our life.

We don't ask. What we're not doing is we're not going and saying like, well, Lord, I guess we kind of know you, but there's maybe some secret hidden knowledge that we don't know about you. Can

you give me some like divine inspiration here that hasn't been disclosed in Scripture?

That's not what Paul is intimating at all. Paul knows that in the Bible, Old Testament and New Testament, we have all we need to know the nature and character and purpose and will of God the Father that has been fulfilled in Jesus and being outworked by the Holy Spirit through his church until the time that Jesus comes and returns and bringing the fullness of his redemption plan to a close.

There is no other secret pathway. There is no other message. There is no other thing that God is on about besides that. And that's what's been happening in the Colossian context here.

Some outside teachers were starting to come in and starting to sprinkle in some yeah buts. Hey, Jesus, hey, it's a great start. Great guy for what the life of heaven might look like, of how to get the blessings of heaven here under how to know and to please God, but you just don't got enough.

[9 : 52] I got the rest. Throughout history, folks have come and gone in that way. You know? I'm coming in God's name as his prophet with this new understanding, with this fresh revelation.

You have Muhammad. You have Joseph Smith. You have different, even guys of much lesser known ilk who have come and gone. In 2011, a self-proclaimed prophet of God named Warren Jeffs was imprisoned for crimes against minors in Arizona.

A whole community of people like drifted and normalized sin that we would see as so offensive because they were convinced that this man had a direct line to heaven.

Whatever he said was like God's word and you better follow it. To disobey Warren Jeffs was to disobey God himself. It took several years, but he groomed them and slowly this Jeffs guy convinced him that he had God's secret knowledge.

Through him, they could know the true way to please God, the true way and the assurance to get to heaven. And what's sad is if they had just taken some time to carefully know and examine the scriptures, it would have proven that his secret knowledge was leading them away from the way of Jesus.

[11 : 15] We have to beware as disciples of Jesus, as followers of Jesus, there are bad actors out there. Beware the promises made by folks who claim to have the new path or the only right path to reach heaven and everyone else has got it wrong, but they're getting it right.

And they're gonna demand your blind allegiance to them alone. And here's the thing, their promises to you are often connected to some form of commerce. It's behind a paywall of some sorts.

And it always benefits them. And you're either giving your money or you're using your body for their sake. Here's the thing, if you give your allegiance to anything above Jesus, you are going to end up walking in contradiction to his character and his will.

And for Paul, walking worthy of our Lord was no small thing. We see that in verse 10. So as he says, he wants them to know to have all wisdom and understanding and the knowledge of Christ. He wants them to know these things. So why? 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.

[12 : 21] Paul, what he does, he shifts here. He moves from what they need from God to why they need it. He's saying, be filled with all of these things. Be filled for this reason, to glorify God.

That's what happens when Jesus saves us. We want to live to glorify God. And for the rest of our lives, we realize both how marvelous that calling is and then we start to realize how difficult that calling is.

Jesus, his life, put that on display. He came and he lived and he walked among us, but his purpose here was to glorify the Father. He said, man, if you've seen me, you have seen the Father.

And when our lives are set on that one pursuit, just like Jesus's was, what we do is we reveal Jesus. We reveal the Father as well through our lives.

A life that glorifies God puts him on display, puts Jesus on display because it's a life lived in reverence to Jesus, but it's also lived in reference to how we lived. Right?

[13 : 23] It is both knowing the person of Jesus and knowing the way of Jesus and what he did. Maybe we need to bring back the WWJD bracelets. Or not.

We don't have to. Jesus changed the game for how we can live and for disciples of Jesus, it's how we should live. It's what he calls us into. In 2008, a guy named Pep Guardiola changed how soccer was played.

The teams that he managed have dominated the best leagues internationally since that time. He's been so successful for so long that all the top clubs started to copy what is now called the Guardiola

way.

They develop players like he does. They change their practices and training and drills to the ones he does. They adopted his game formation. Right now, the two top clubs in the English Premier League are coached by Pep and his protege, a guy named Mikel Arteta, a guy that played for him while he was at Barcelona and then who coached as an assistant under Pep for years.

And this disciple of Pep is doing the Guardiola way. Everyone can see Pep through Mikel's coaching style. You can make a case that Pep is being glorified through Arteta's coaching.

[14:51] And walking in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Jesus, bearing fruit in every good work. That's how our lives glorify Jesus when we live them the Jesus way.

And that's what we should be praying for. That's what Paul is praying for. He's saying, man, I'm praying for these things. I'm praying for you to be filled with the fullness of the knowledge and knowing Jesus with all wisdom and spiritual understanding so that you can do these things so that you can live a life that glorifies God.

That's what his prayer is all about. Let's get practical about what the Jesus way is then. Well, Jesus loved God, right? Spent time with him even while he was here on earth, domesticated in a body of flesh.

Spent time with him, communed with God regularly in prayer. Knew the word inside and out. Jesus, he loved God. Jesus also loved people. He went around teaching and healing and showed compassion.

He gave them his time and his attention. He cared for them. That's how Jesus showed us his way. It's loving God and loving people.

[16:03] And Jesus made disciples and he showed them his 12 to go to do these same things. And so we glorify God when we love like Jesus does. There are a lot of verses we could read to prove that point but here's one from Romans also written by Paul who wrote Colossians.

And we see some similar language in some of these verses to this Colossian passage we read. So Romans 15, one to three and then verses five to seven it says this, we who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.

Let each of us please his neighbor for his good to build him up. For Christ did not please himself but as it is written the reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.

Now may the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another in accord with Christ Jesus that together you may with one voice glorify God the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ to therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you for the glory of God.

we see something very different here to life in Jesus. When you think about how we typically use our strength and our power it's to build ourselves up that's like Pharaoh.

[17:18] Pharaoh used people to build his greatness. Jesus used his greatness to build people. God's love is others oriented. It seeks out people's needs and it moves into help.

Notice how Romans 15 begins the strong has an obligation to bear with the weak. Walking in wisdom to glorify God it puts a lot more responsibility and expectation for those in a place of authority or in power.

So we do not glorify God when we stand with the powerful but don't stand up for the weak. Well who are the weak and needy among us? Who are those that God says we should be looking to build up?

Do we know who they are? Are we aware of where they are? Or are they kind of just lost in the shadows because we got our eyes fixed on the important people that have all the money and the fame and the profile?

Are we standing with the bully or are we standing with the broken? When we think about needs which comes to mind?

[18:20] Do your needs come first to mind or do the needs of others come to mind? And actually all these things these are questions that we got to wrestle with because this is the Christian ethic that guides our home life our work life and our civic and our political life.

And Elliot's going to preach on some of that in chapter 3 in a few weeks and really looking forward to that. But when we live to meet our needs our own needs what we do we do one of two things right?

A life of meeting a life that you live to meet your own needs you will tend toward one of two things isolation right? You will kind of isolate yourself and like just cut cut off more people because it's a safer and safer place because that's the easier thing to do and to step into vulnerability of community.

Or if you're going to work hard to meet your own needs what you often end up doing is you often end up overworking. When we live to make sure others are meeting our needs something different happens but equally not good.

we tend to become very demanding of people and also we become very judgmental toward people oh they're not doing the thing that they should be doing why aren't they meeting the needs that I need them to meet?

[19 : 41] When we live knowing our needs and entrusting them to God here's the different way right? You can know what your needs are but you can come to him you can supply them and trust them to him and when you do that knowing that he supplies really all the things that you need it frees us up to love people it really does it really frees us up we can love people and we can lower ourselves to build them up so let's talk about what all of us are already maybe thinking right now which is am I the strong or the weak in this scenario right?

which one am I? because it's kind of nice in the Christian ethic to be the weaker person all the care and attention flows to you right? well here's the thing about life in Jesus there will always be almost always be life circumstances and your own personal limitations and failures that will make you the weaker brother and sister in the room but that doesn't exempt you from the responsibilities of the strong in Romans 15 your limitations aren't the only measure for whether you were qualified to glorify God to love and build others up Jesse how because verse 11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might for all endurance and patience with joy that's the next thing Paul prays for putting this all together don't underestimate God's power and don't underestimate your weakness the church is made up of people who at the same time are both the strong and the weak you guys fall into both categories all at the same time we are weak according to the natural state of things we have limited we're limited in time and energy and resources our minds and our hearts aren't able to grasp the fullness of who God is nor the measure of his love for us we are also incapable of loving

God and others as we should but here's the thing God gives us all the power we need to do that it doesn't come from us it comes from him that means simultaneously for you and me that we are one weak and needy people that depend upon the grace of God and the kindness of others towards us we need that we need each other's compassion and care but also at the same time we are strengthened with divine power to know God to love him and to love others Paul says that we have this treasure this divine power hidden in jars of clay he says you know what a follower of Jesus is like they are like these cracked clay pots that existed very fragile too fragile to walk on our own to be worthy of the Lord to have a walk worthy of the Lord but for God's grace he supplies the strength we lack he supplies the power we need and he gives in abundance abundance and that's why we should ask for it he gives an abundance to those who ask

Paul asks boldly for their sake for the full measure of all power for all endurance and patience when you notice your weakness when you notice you're in a difficult spot when you notice like oh my gosh I'm not doing well here I'm the weak person I'm the needy person do you ever stop and ask God to strengthen you with his divine power do you dare to ask for all his power I mean that's like a bold ask Lord I just don't want some I want all that power all the power you have to give to me I want all of it send it my way do we do we stop and ask those things in those moments well why not how often do we forget to ask in those moments and just kind of shift right into relying on our wisdom and our strength I'm just going to shift right into that we don't turn to God we don't pray at first we don't continue to pray it all the way through when we hit those weak spots and those needy spots in our lives and that's okay honestly

God's not fussed about that we're all great at forgetting about the priority and power of prayer we're all professionals when it comes to that piece God knows that and he's patient with us and he just keeps calling us back to the way of Jesus he keeps calling us back to hey my children disciples of Jesus follow the Jesus way pray it first pray it up pray it all the way through we need to learn to pray like Paul for all power in the moments where we feel weak and powerless and I'm going to argue that also we need to do the same thing when we're feeling top of our game right so in your life if you've been hit with a flat tire flat hair doctor says we need to talk you've missed a deadline at work

lust is pulling at you again to make a bad decision the news headlines are filling you with fear stop and pray in that moment Jesus I need all your power right now to glorify you I can't do it without you but if you're doing great like work's going awesome you're crushing it you're meeting your sales quotas the bosses love you the shareholders love you or maybe the kids are behaving dinner turned out just right little Jimmy said grace in an amazing way and you're just like praise [25 : 08] God for that and you're about to pull out the Bible for family devotions hey pray in those moments Lord I need all your power to glorify you in this I can't do this without you so whether you're low or at the top of your game pray it through pray it first you need his help living a life that glorifies God doesn't underestimate his power and it doesn't underestimate your weakness so boldly ask for those things boldly ask for his help and all his powers that you that you can have what you need to glorify him but not just to glorify him to do what this verse says we need to glorify him with joy right not just like okay I don't have to do this sure I'll do it whatever do it with joy if your patience and joy is gone in your life you're trying to follow

Jesus it's kind of like a check engine light okay it's telling you that something's not going on right you've been running too long in your own strength and in your own will when that happens it's time to say like oh shoot I need to stop back I need to pull back from like the normal way of doing things here and reassess what's going on what I've been doing it's time to stop and ask God like man recenter me back in you like reorient me back to your way come and fill me again Lord I need maybe I've been doing this apart from you and trying in my own strength Lord come and fill me with your power Nehemiah talks about the joy of the Lord is our strength pray for that knowing that joy is going to come when God answers that prayer and he will answer that prayer also we need to know that there is another pathway to joy even while we wait in unanswered prayer like you're praying for that you're saying

Lord I need all that power because man I'm facing some stuff and I need to endure with patience and you're saying like I can do that with joy like man I need all that power working in me to give me some strength for this I don't know how I can do that and you could say like well once he answers that prayer then I'm going to get some joy and Paul says ah no you can get it now how here's how verse 12 giving thanks to the father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints and light 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 Paul isn't saying ask for these things he's saying you already got them so remember them there are certain blessings in God that are already yours there are certain needs that have already been met and always will be met and that is never going to change take joy give thanks for what God has done whatever trial or disappointment you face don't forget to give thanks for these assurances he has qualified you Paul didn't say give thanks! give thanks to God so that he will qualify you he says give thanks to God he has it's been done it's finished it's completed it's you can rest in that he has qualified you to share in the inheritance of saints and light you have everlasting life that is a promise that cannot be taken away he has delivered you from the domain of darkness who wants to live in darkness that is terrible he's delivered you from that domain and has transferred you into the kingdom of his beloved son you are a citizen of heaven right you got your passport in Jesus you have redemption you have been redeemed all the shame and the guilt and the sins that stained you and that you carried around that you wish you could rip off and take away that you never could he has done that for you he's redeemed you the forgiveness of sins it's washed away it's wiped away you don't carry that anymore these assurances mean for you and me as we seek to live a life that glorifies God in what we do it means that God has glorified himself in you already disciples of Jesus and it means those things those things that Jesus has done the father has accomplished in him they don't rest on you if our heavenly and here's the thing if that is true if our heavenly father has already given us all these blessings to glorify himself in us how much more will he give us all we need to glorify him every day amen as the band comes up would you stand with me sorry I'm doing something a little bit differently just kind of something God kind of nudged me during worship time whether or not you're a follower of Jesus I'm speaking to everybody in the room whether or not you're a follower of Jesus are you tired are you angry are you frustrated are you confused do you feel empty do you feel despairing do you feel desperate do you feel hopeless do you feel guilt and shame there's only one answer there's only one person to come to and his name is [30 : 53] Jesus he has all that you need he has all the power you need he has everything that you could ask or desire to know him and to walk in his way to live in that beautiful freedom with the

saints that know Jesus Christ come to him if you would close your eyes with me can you give thanks to God the father for what he has done in his son maybe you're here and you would not say you're a follower of Jesus the invitation to you is to come to him take a bold step if your heart has been crying out like man this is not it the way I've been living my life this is not it it is empty it feels meaningless there's got to be something more that something more is

Jesus Christ and he invites you to come to him you say Jesse how do I do that well you you simply come to him you pray just like Paul prayed here you just pray Lord I've done my own way long enough I'm coming to you I believe in you I need!

my sins forgiven I need and I know that you're the only one who's done that and I'm going to surrender my way of doing things trying to find my own way into heaven and try to find and make life on earth as much heaven like as possible I'm going to trust in you Jesus there's going to be a prayer!

up on the screen for you to pray! pray!! pray! that prayer and you will be saved and after you pray that prayer man I'll be right up here in the front come and let me know I'd love to know that you've given your life to Jesus Christ if you're a follower of Jesus we're going to take communion in a moment and it's this invitation to come as you are all those things you may be feeling you come qualifies if you're in a desperate and hopeless place it's Jesus who delivers if you're feeling like a prisoner trapped in dark sin some kind of addiction remember that Jesus is the one who rescues and brings you into the kingdom his kingdom of light to live in does it seem like the record of your wrongs just follow you around like a rap sheet that you can't get rid of Jesus is the one who forgives come to him come to him with thanks

I just want to give you a moment to pray to God right now as you feel led to pray